

February 1st, 2024  
SB 352  
Proponent  
Written Only  
Lindsey Berning

Chairwoman Gossage and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB 352.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, there were far too many stories of family members being separated from their loved ones who were infected with COVID-19 in a hospital or nursing home - children being separated from their elderly parents, or wives being told they could not see their husbands before they took their last breath. All of this happened because of a disease that had a relatively low death rate for many population groups.

My family watched my grandmother slip away as her Alzheimer's progressed during COVID. One of the less stringent visitation policies adopted during the pandemic at her nursing facility allowed us to sit outside on a porch and call her on the phone while she was on the other side of the front window. She had regressed so far during the time prior to this (when visitors were not allowed) that she no longer recognized my mother (her own daughter) who had previously visited several times every month. She could not understand that we were sitting on the other side of the window to look and see us and hardly understood the concept of talking on the phone by this point, so she struggled to hold it to her ear and our visits were often cut short. My mother couldn't hug her mother and I couldn't hug my grandmother, even if none of us had any symptoms.

Connection and community are basic human rights. It's no mystery why depression and suicide rates skyrocketed during COVID while we were all forced inside our homes. Please do not allow healthcare facilities to deprive Kansans of the ability to visit their own family and loved ones ever again. Please pass SB 352.

Thank you for your consideration and hard work as an esteemed legislator.