

February 5, 2024

Bill #SB 352, John D. Springer Patient Bill of Rights
PROPONENT with provisions

Karen Hershey

Chairwoman Gossage and Members of the Committee,

I am compelled to share with you that I, and maybe others, are praying for you. I am praying in the name of Jesus, the Messiah, that the will of God Almighty be done regarding the decisions you all make this session.

I am also praying that God will bless those on this committee, in the legislature as a whole, in particular those in leadership, who seek to honor and serve Him and the people of Kansas.

To those who mock Almighty God, His word, and His people, to any who accept bribes of any sort, lie, cheat, work on behalf big corporations/government to the detriment of the people, the children, the poor, the widows, the orphans, the elderly or the infirm, I pray that God will remove them from office.

When we as a people heartlessly mandated, supported and orchestrated the large scale, carte blanche denial of visitation by family members in hospitals, care facilities, etc as happened during the covid debacle we began to lose our sense of compassion for the very people we were to care for. May we never repeat this travesty.

To not allow family members to visit hospital patients of any age or visit residents of care facilities not only brought fear and uncertainty to both patients and family members but also allowed accountability for the care of these folks to fall through the cracks. This policy also robbed the dying and their loved ones the human need of being together as a life transitions from this world to the next.

A dear, elderly friend of ours was put on a ventilator shortly after admission to a KS hospital. He died a few days later without he or his family being able to say goodbye. His wife received texts from him telling her what was happening. He knew something wasn't right. But she couldn't do anything about it. She wasn't allowed in to see him, to help him. She kept trying the nurses station — for hours — to find out what was going on. He was scared. She was scared. She wasn't allowed to even see him through a window, go talk to the nurses. Nothing. Later when she couldn't get him on his cell or his room phone she called the nurses station, again no answer. This went on for several hours. They finally notified her — after he died. She wept on my shoulder at his memorial service saying she didn't care if she got sick, she just didn't want him to die by himself.

The mother of another friend lived in a care facility and was struggling with anxiety due to dementia. The family tried to stay in touch with her via bedside phone and updated on her care via the nurses station. Several days went by with the family receiving no communication whatsoever despite many attempts. They were denied the visitation they requested to check on her. They too were finally contacted - after she had died. When asking how she died the family was informed by a truth-telling employee that the patient had been highly sedated and left laying on her back for long enough that she contracted and died from pneumonia... This is medical neglect that could have been avoided had the family been able to see her - and advocate for her care.

This is an excellent bill and has been is a long time in coming. As you work on it consider this exhortation — “Don't do to someone else what you wouldn't want done to you”.

Please support and vote to pass out of committee SB352 only with provisions added that would protect both patient and visitors rights regarding the right to decline medical screenings, procedures, and wearing of medical equipment including but not limited to scans, retinal scans, vaccines, masks that would affect the ability to visit and/or advocate for the patient.

Prayerfully and respectfully,
Karen Hershey, Kansas