

TO: General Assembly, State of CT, Committee on Public Health

FROM: Amy Badini, Old Greenwich, CT

RE: S.B. 1030 "An Act Concerning Long-Term Care Facilities"

DATE: 16 March 2021

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

For the sake of the most vulnerable population, I implore you to pass S.B. 1030, *effective immediately*, please!

My mother, Andrea Smernoff, is 78 with end-stage Alzheimers. She has been immobile and nonverbal for many years. Before covid, I would visit her and my adopted grandmother **Elizabeth Rielly**, 98, 3-4 days a week. While Andrea cannot communicate with me, I would have many conversations with Elizabeth and my mother could hear my voice. Phone or video communication is just not an option in Andrea's case. My presence at The Nathaniel Witherell was a way of insuring proper care of my mother. It would be very easy to leave Andrea in bed all day, if I were not around. Since the pandemic, Andrea has been left to stare at the ceiling in her room extremely isolated and lacking of any socialization outside of her tremendous aide, Jackie.

Governor Lamont has done a disservice to the residents in long term care by not issuing an executive order early on in the pandemic. We now know that the rates of covid related deaths are relatively equal in states that locked us out, like Connecticut, compared to those states that took a more humane approach, like Florida. The difference is in the isolation. Connecticut has had many more deaths from failure to thrive than Florida. You all need to take a very close look at this issue. Deaths from failure to thrive are preventable and under your watch, too many have died from this preventable situation.

I call your attention to **Section 8**, regarding the establishment of Family Councils. Please include additional verbiage to express the fact that FCs are advocacy groups for family members. They also provide education and support to each other. And lastly, the mission of FCs is to support resident life.

**Section 10** does not adequately describe the difference of an essential support person and a visitor. When making restrictions on visitors, there needs to be a distinct difference between an ESP and just a visitor in order to avoid the isolation created over this past year. Additionally, January 2022 is completely unacceptable. Again, we must learn from the mistakes over the past year. This needs to be passed effective immediately.

**Section 11** I am pleased that this section is already indicated as effective upon passage of the bill. LTC facilities can no longer have immunity AND no oversight. Residents need to have camera's for communication purposes in their rooms.

In conclusion, my mother and other friends in LTCFs *need this bill, and need it now*. The more logistically complex sections may need more time, however, Sections 8,10 and 11 need to be passed upon confirmation of this bill. Thank you in advance for your time and attention.

Amy Badini  
Old Greenwich, CT