

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

FROM: Elisabeth Franklin Quigley, Cos Cob 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 dear mother, Frances Franklin, 86, is a resident in the Dementia Unit at The Nathaniel Witherell in Greenwich, CT. I am her only living relative in the United States; our cousins live in France. Her mother was an only child; she was an only child; I am her only child. Until the Lock-Out due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, my Mom and I would spend almost every evening together. I would feed her dinner, sometimes taking her outdoors for some fresh air either before or afterwards; we would watch a little TV before it was her bedtime. She is non-ambulatory and no longer has control over her hands, so she requires a lot of physically demanding attention from her care team. I have always asked her periodically if she feels lonely; before the pandemic, she would rarely reply in the affirmative. Since the Lock-Out, the answer is always "yes". Whenever I am allowed to visit, I have to explain why we cannot see each other much, why we have to keep such distance, why I am not allowed to embrace her, because she doesn't remember. We were always affectionate.

There is so much good in this bill that should have been in place months ago, and *time is of the essence*. Our loved ones in LTCFs need the protections passage of this bill would afford; we, their family members, need the transparency and accessibility its passage requires.

Of course, bureaucracy takes time, I understand, but *October 1<sup>st</sup> is a long time from now*. Several subsections indicate a deadline of "on or before January 1, 2022", 10 months from now! Ten months is an *eternity* when you live in a LTCF!

Looking carefully at the language, some of the sections require LTCFs merely to "facilitate" or "establish a process". I can understand 6-10 months to *execute* on a new law, but *7-10 months just to facilitate or establish a process seems an inordinately long time*, and our loved ones do not have time on their side.

I call your attention to **Section 8**, regarding the establishment of Family Councils. These groups can be of great assistance to LTCFs due to the vested

interest of family members and friends to facilitate good care for their loved ones. They are the most reliable source of volunteers, and can be of support to care staff. It would take an Admissions Department a half-hour at most to generate a list of family members to approach, and another half-hour to craft a letter encouraging their ideas, participation, and eventual implementation of the Council. The group could / should probably come under the auspices of the Head of Social Work for the LTCF.

**Section 9** adds several crucial items to be covered in residents' care plans. *I cannot emphasize enough the need for this section to be implemented as soon as possible!* LTCFs have been all over the map when it comes to visitation. Now that residents are vaccinated, and most of their adult children and friends will have been vaccinated, as well, visitation protocols must be set as soon as possible and the LTCFs be opened up to them. Dictated by the most recent science and data for the county, protocols should be adjusted bi-monthly, if not weekly.

*Surely, **Sections 8 and 9** could be required immediately, with an implementation deadline of June 1<sup>st</sup>.* Indeed, I consider these sections to be crucial first steps to encouraging the implementation of several other sections in the bill.

Finally, I hope you consider adding in **Section 1, number 1**, the inclusion of Haitian Creole for any written materials. Many of our most dedicated caretakers are of Haitian origin, and although their English is fine, it communicates greater value and inclusion.

In conclusion, my Mom and other friends in LTCFs *need this bill, and need it now.* The more logistically complex sections need more time, of course, but please pass this bill, and please consider moving up the deadlines for implementation of Sections 8 and 9.

I thank you in advance for your time and attention.

God bless you all,

Elisabeth Franklin Quigley

Cos Cob CT

