

Valerie Marcella

Bill 6634 I am in Support of essential Support person however this bill is too vague

Committee on Human Services

March 25,2020

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee

My Name is Valerie Marcella and I am from Niantic I would like to express my support of essential support person However the language does not show much transparency of how this would look once a state-wide visitation policy is created

All residents should have access to a resident appointed essential support person. This would provide the loving care of a family member residents need It would provide protection against neglect and/or abuse The language used in this bill is unclear and a visitation policy should have been outlined prior to public testimony A bill should be inclusive of all information before coming before the public for a hearing Unfortunately many residents and family members have not been able to trust language in most guidelines that have come out during the pandemic as it was weak or confusing and too much left for facilities to interpret incorrectly Please be mindful as to what type of language is used to create visitation guidelines prior to passage

Before Covid-19 lockdown our family was with my grandmother every day. She was always smiling, sociable and fun loving. We ate dinner with her every night and breakfast on the weekends. Monitor how much she ate what she ate and request a different meal if she wasn't satisfied. We encouraged her to drink fluids. Often noticing she was dehydrated from not drinking during the hours before we arrived. We encouraged and assisted her in exercise. We brought her outside for fresh air. We assisted her to the restroom. Sometimes I would shower her when she refused staff provided showers Every "visit" I would lotion her skin top to bottom. I would cut her nails and pluck her hairs. Weekly I cleaned and organized her room I washed her laundry (as most items would go missing) We read with her, we assisted her with writing out paperwork and family cards We would bring in our family pets that she loves to visit with her. Regularly communicate to the staff needs not being met such as the call button not in her reach She is not permitted to get up on her own and must be assisted to the restroom because she is a fall risk When there was a medical emergency at any hour, we were allowed in to assist with making medical decisions and comfort her emotionally. Console her at times of stress and protect her when she reported verbal or physical aggression (multiple times) Because she has dementia no staff was reprimanded as she could describe the incident in great detail but not what shift it occurred on or describe the staff member who treated her poorly, she would have benefited from cameras in the room and the other residents could be protected as I am sure the facility could then take action ALL ESSENTIAL CARE

After Covid-19 lockdown. Before weather changed, we were allowed outdoor visits, they were not meaningful. Being 6 feet apart with masks on made it extremely challenging to communicate with her. She is used to reading our lips to understand what we say. Loud heaters or the building's air-conditioner running made it even more challenging to hear each other. Our facility has not opened to indoor visits due to outbreak status since the September guidance. I have repeatedly requested compassionate care visits. I was allowed two compassionate care visits where I had to wear 2 masks, a face shield, gloves, booties and plastic gown and she did not even recognize me. **This is not compassionate or caring.** She became distant in the facetime visits. Those are not beneficial either except that I can see that she is wearing someone else's prescription glasses or someone else's clothing. That is unacceptable. We did window visits thru glass six feet apart and we still are required to wear our masks. Ridiculous. During our visits she hugged herself and we hugged ourselves and pretend we are hugging each other. During this period, she had **deteriorated and has suffered emotionally** She was confused scared and alone. She had been depressed from the isolation stopped smiling and didn't talk like she did prior She lost roommates to death with no family to console her. She had and still has limited access to religion other than on TV but since she is hearing, and vision impaired it is not beneficial. She has suffered cognitively. Her dementia is progressing. She has lost her ability to read and her ability to write. She has forgotten family members. She has suffered physically. She has lost muscle and movement. Her skin uncared for became dry and flaky, her lips sometimes look like raisins. We had provided the facility with all essential items to care for her. When she had an overnight medical emergency for her heart, she was denied access to a doctor until the morning. The next day an APRN did an exam and prescribed new medications. New medications that were not authorized by her healthcare agent. I only discovered that this occurred during a FaceTime two days later. She has lost faith in their care because of the response None of this would have occurred if we had Essential caregivers approved

Mathematica report, national consumer voice plus many more highlight some of what isolation has done, the lives lost and how family is essential

I support an essential support person but again feel this bills language needs more transparency