

**Tania Ryea – Daughter of LTC Resident**  
**An Act Concerning Essential Support Persons and a State-Wide Visitation Policy for Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities. – H.B. No. 6634 – Support**

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2021**

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Tania Ryea, and I am from Tolland, CT. I would like to express my support for bill H.B. No. 6634, An Act Concerning Essential Support Persons and a State-Wide Visitation Policy for Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities. Specifically, Sections 1 & 2.

My Mother, Janice, has dementia. Psychiatric care, family/loving interactions, emotional support, basic daily assistance, and medication management are critical to her care.

Staffing levels at LTC facilities are less than adequate. Especially in Memory care units. Residents with Alzheimer's or Dementia REQUIRE, not desire, but REQUIRE, additional assistance with everyday tasks. Dressing, personal hygiene, and eating. They also require human interaction. Their memory may be impaired, but they certainly feel emotion, a soft touch, hand holding, and most importantly, they feel love. These are essential to their well-being. With the lack of staffing, these residents are NOT provided with the care that they require. In the absence of additional staff, myself or one of my two sisters provide for my mother with this essential care. Pre-Covid, we would visit my mother, daily, to ensure all her needs were met. As soon as we entered the unit, she recognized us as her daughter, walked up to us, hugged us, and would proceed to having a conversation with us. We brought her food we knew she enjoyed, food she fed to herself. We changed her bedding weekly and did her laundry. We provided her with basic hygiene needs to ensure she was clean, and this also reduced the potential for bacterial infections. We took her out every other Sunday and every holiday for family outings. She was happy, mobile, and required minimal medication.

During the Covid lockdown, we mistakenly trusted her facility to provide this essential care to her in our absence. During this time, she became immobile, stop feeding herself, lost weight, and was kept on a sedative medication longer than required. Why? Most likely so she slept more and required less attention? That's my best guess. Had we been able to assist her, daily, I truly believe she would not be in the condition she is today.

The Bill requests that an essential support person be appointed. If this requirement was in place in the past, residents would have received optimal care. Their essential caregiver would have been in place thus freeing up staff to care for other residents more adequately. By supporting this bill, LTC residents, like my mother, will be assured of having the essential care they require.

Thank You for your time and consideration. I hope you will join me in supporting H.B. No. 6634.