

Good afternoon and thank you chairpersons, co-chairs, aging and long term care committee, and all State Representatives for giving me this opportunity to speak yet once again on HB120 formally known as HB770, allowing family members access to their loved ones in facilities as a primary caregiver. I have to say, today is bittersweet for me as it was one year ago today my mother was caged away from me for nearly a year of her life. I would assume since HB770 was pushed aside, most of you, if not all, can't relate as to how I feel today. As my state representative said to me once, "Ya get tired". Well, guess what, we are all tired.

My name is Scott Reynolds. I'm here yet once again to make you aware of the importance of this bill and the impact it has not only on hundreds of families but thousands. To be honest, I'm quit disgusted that nothing has been done since I spoke on behalf of this bill the first part of December 2020. Yet here we are again discussing a bill with the upmost importance 3 months later while the focus seems to have been on frivolous bills being passed in the house and elders pushed to the curb like pieces of trash. When I spoke on behalf of this bill back in December, I stressed the concerns amongst what the elderly in facilities are going through and family members thinking there would be no problem getting this bill pushed through. Boy was I wrong. However, I have to give praise to Representative Richardson and Representative Frazier for keeping the discussion on the bill alive as well as the 29 co-sponsors who could see the importance of this bill, which happen to be republicans from what I can see. The rest have used this as nothing more than a political stance and are denying the right to our elders to have a full and happy life with family members during their final days. Every constituent in the state of Ohio should be made aware of this. This has to be one of the most disgusting and inhuman things I've ever seen in politics. You should be ashamed of yourselves. Quit honestly, it sickens me to the core.

As some of you are aware, I was called in for end of life for mother back in June for 5 days. This is also a facility my local state representative's family has supported for many years. Once her vitals became stable, I was told to leave the facility as I was no longer needed to comfort my mother. She was dying of loneliness - plain and simple.

Moving forward to December 28, I was called in for end of life yet once again. Let's point out I was given a quick Covid test on that Monday and never again given another after coming and going for five days in and out of the facility. Not allowed to eat in my mother's dining room, but, could eat pizza behind the nurse's station. I assumed Covid was not contagious behind the nurse's station so I went with it. After spending another 5 days with my mother, I knew this was it and she was not going to pull through this time. With that said, she passed New Year's Day with me by her side holding her hand and me telling her I never forgot her, I always loved her, and she deserved to be treated like a queen again like she was prior to the lockdown. All due to the selfishness and lack of respect from our Governor.

Do any of you know what this is? Let me explain. This is the nightgown that was cut off of my mother's dead body at the mortuary after she was wheeled out of her facility and stripped from her child for almost a year - thanks to all of you. I should note, the next day after my mother passed, I went to get her things out of her room. Upon arrival after coming and going for five days, I was told they would box her belongings up and I could pick them up on the dock the day before her funeral.

Before moving forward I need to back up to the the first week of December after speaking on HB770. Four weeks prior to being called in for end of life, I was granted visitation with my mother in her facility's chapel. Of course since fighting for thousands of elders and families, I jumped on the chance. I found it odd since she was not on crisis care at that time. Upon entering her facility, and into the chapel, she was wheeled in. Of course I asked why I was there. A staff member looked at me and said, "I was told to give you visitation with your mother with no time limit". Upon hearing that, something still seemed off to

me. I asked again. The staff member spoke up and said, "You are here with your mother because you are constantly giving interviews, you have spoken at the state house, and the facility is somewhat concerned of what your next move will be". So basically this was to keep me quiet. However, that was not happening. One thing I need to note is, during a chapel visit one week prior to being called in for end of life my mother who did not speak finally spoke and said, "I love you", as I was walking out to leave. I knew when I heard that, the end was coming.

Thinking to myself this was not fair to thousands of others I thought to myself, if speaking up and making my voice heard is to help thousands of family members in my situation I'm going to keep on being vocal for the ones that can't and won't. Hoping they too will get the same treatment as I. What is sickening is, there are hundreds that want to speak up but are afraid of retaliation on their loved ones in facilities. I was not one of those people but do understand how someone can feel this way. Again, how HB770, now HB120 cannot be passed ASAP without a second thought is beyond barbaric and inhuman to thousands of family members and elders in these cages called nursing homes. I will never get past the disgust of what the state of Ohio has done to our elders and family members. Oh, but wait, opening bars, restaurants, reception halls, shopping malls takes precedence over elders? Got it.

So we really need to have a discussion as to why HB120 needs passed? I would hope by hearing my story back in December and the events that occurred afterwards would be enough. Why are elders in facilities being treated like caged livestock? Are you not concerned they are dying from loneliness and depression from the un-attachment of loved ones? Why do you think my mother lost 40 pounds and refused to eat? Do you recall me telling you back in December she was banging on the windows begging me to come in to at least give her a hug? Have you ever stood outside a window watching a parent wither away? Do any of you have any empathy for our elderly? They are our whole life. Shouldn't we be there for them? Don't they deserve affection and love in the same manner most of you receive outside of the statehouse?

I could go on and on about the way elders in facilities have been treated. Seems like all you are doing is throwing bits and pieces of red meat out there to suffice family members on the other side of the glass cages that separate them from their loved one. What is it about HB120 that needs more discussion? It's pretty clear in the first paragraph of the bill. For those that are having a hard time reading it let me help you with it. The first paragraph in the bill states; To permit compassionate care visits in long term care facilities during the Covid-19 pandemic state of emergency, to establish criteria for those visits, and to declare an emergency. What's the problem? Reading further on about the bill it clearly states the reasons as to why, and yet family members are still being denied access. I guess my next question would be, are you ok watching your family member dying through a piece of glass? Think about this, right now there is no accountability for elders being locked away. What are family members going to see once they are aloud in these facilities? Trust me, I know what I saw and the deterioration not only in my mother but the deterioration in many more residents I was able to see while in the facility for just one week was heartbreaking.

Ask yourself, why did we even bother vaccinating elders in facilities only to get their hopes up to be with their families? Are you aware, even with elders in facilities that even with the vaccine they are still being told the doors will not open? Why is it that facilities all seem to have their own set of rules? Maybe Jill, wife of Senator Steve Wilson, could elaborate on this further since she has ties to Otterbein nursing facility in Lebanon Ohio, and is not returning calls or emails from concerned family members.

Bottom line here is, if facilities are not gong to be opened up, which by all means should be at this point, give family members and our elders some sort of assurance they will be united with their loved one

during a compassionate situation. Stop taking this issue so lightly and pass HB120. If this continues and nothing is done, the blood will be on your hands as thousands of elders in Ohio will continue to decline and die of loneliness without loved ones. Keep this in mind as this could very well be you one day looking out at your child through a glass window.