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Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the House Health Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 324, Shirley and Wilma's law.

Proponent testimony HB 324 Mary Lou Bordner

My name is Marylou Bordner. I am a life long resident of Green Springs, Ohio, Seneca County. I am a wife, mother, grandma, and great grandma. I am also the owner of a successful 32 year small business.

In late August of 2021, my husband, Michael Bordner, contracted Covid 19 and was hospitalized for 16 days. The last time I saw him for the next 14 days was when I dropped him off, as sick as he was, at the ER entrance to Bellevue Hospital. I was told I could not be with him and to "go home and wait".

For 14 days the only contact I had with him was by phone. I was able to glean some information from the floor nurses. I really had no conversation with any doctor as they are all hospitalists and rotate shifts. They are extremely difficult to contact. Many of those days I had no idea what was going on with Michael's condition or treatment.

I believe that Michael was not only ill with Covid, but became very depressed due to isolation from loved ones. Our Pastor could only offer encouragement and prayer via phone conversations.

As for myself, Michael's isolation and separation from me was a source of anxiety and stress. For two weeks I had very little idea of his treatment or care he was receiving. I couldn't even see him through a window. His last two days in the hospital I was allowed to visit as he was moved out of isolation.

I understand part of this, but there has got to be a way to keep loved ones together. There has got to be a better way.

Respectfully

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Proponent testimony HB 324 Michael Bordner

My name is Michael Bordner and I live in rural Seneca county and am a retired Sr. machine designer from the Nordson Corporation in Amherst, Ohio. I am currently the Adams township Zoning inspector, and have a small wood working business, both are part time.

Late last summer I contracted Covid 19 and was hospitalized for 16 days 14 of which were spent in an isolation room. As you are probably aware, Isolation means no one is permitted in the room except hospital personnel and then only if they have the proper personal protective equipment.

Life in isolation is a lonely existence, when oxygen levels drop into the high 70% range a feeling of suffocation overcomes you. The nurses and other personnel do the best they can to reassure you, but they are stretched thin for time and have many duties to perform. I felt bad about asking nurses to go to the hospital entrance to take dirty laundry to my wife, and return with clean laundry and other personal items that a person uses daily, but had no choice. To the nurses credit, none of them complained, but it did take them away from their work.

While in the hospital I was blessed to have a cell phone and charger, it was the only way I could try to coach my wife as how to pay bills using a computer, in the end she called the vendors and requested mail in invoices and payments.

As mentioned before, the experience was one of loneliness, the high points of each day was when my wife would call, or my pastor would call to pray with me.

Along with the feeling of loneliness comes the feeling of possible death. I was blessed and eventually discharged to recuperate at home, but many people are not.

The thought of facing death without the comfort of a loved one or your spiritual mentor is one that nightmares are made of, yet many people have this reality.

I understand that in the early stages of the current pandemic even people that were not in isolation were denied visitation and some passed on without the reassurance of loved ones or their pastor, priest, rabbi, or other.

Telephones are nice but cannot and should not replace the physical presence of those we love and trust. I urge you to pass house bill 324 for those that need the comfort afforded by clergy and loved ones.

Thank you for allowing us to testify.

Mike & Mary Lou Border

We would be happy to answer your questions.