

## HB236 Testimony

“Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, and Members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for hearing my support testimony for HB 236 The “Never Alone Act.”

My 67-year-old father died in Southwest hospital alone in January 2021 during COVID. He was someone that my 2 brothers saw frequently, and my family (wife, son) saw him multiple times a week. He was beloved by the family, neighbors, and friends.

As we all know, the COVID year of 2020 was a hard time for America in so many ways. What made it far worse is when a family had someone in the hospital battling for his life. It then became inhumane when the family could not visit their loved one, nor could the patient be loved and comforted in person by family members.

It was devastating to have our father, grandpa, sibling, neighbor, and friend left to die alone for 6 weeks in the hospital. Our son, Anthony Silvestro, III, was distraught knowing he could not see his beloved grandpa while he was in the hospital. His best friend was taken from him by COVID and he was denied any ability to see his grandfather in his last days. Our son required counseling as he was angry at God and the world for over a year and a half due to this. There is no doubt in my mind that my son would have been able to handle this far better if he was not denied from seeing his grandfather in his final days.

Aside from the above, it is ridiculous that a family member could not serve as an advocate at his bedside. It was next to impossible to contact any doctor by phone, even though that was the only option for us. My dad was in no condition to advocate for himself and there was no real way to advocate for him without being present.

The most heinous thing I have saved for last. For the last few weeks of his life, while he was on the ventilator, I was told by doctors and nurses over the phone that the only way we could see our father was if we initiated “end-of-life” care. I could not believe it when they “offered” this to us. They wanted us to authorize the murder of our father by narcotics in order for us to see him one last time alive.

For the reasons above, “I urge the committee to vote YES on HB 236.”

Dr. Anthony R. Silvestro, Jr