

November 2024

Thank you for allowing us to submit this written testimony in support of the **Never Alone Act**

Our Mother's Story

Theresa Mikolajewski

Born 5/16/28

Married 10/15/46

Died 4/12/20

Our Mother and Father were members of the Greatest Generation!! They had six children.

We are telling you Mom's story in support of the Never Alone Act/ House Bill 236 and in support of all families who lived our story/tragedy.

Mom became ill in March 2020. She was admitted to the hospital on March 30 and died on Easter Sunday April 12. We were not permitted to see her during those twelve days.

Our sister (who was an ICU RN for 30 plus years) was Mom's "go to person" for anything medical. When Mom had to be admitted to the hospital at various times, Deb never left her side. Mom felt safe because she knew Deb was there. Mom was never left alone. Deb knew Mom's medical history, medications and daily living routines. Unfortunately, when Mom needed her family most, we couldn't be there.

When we called to talk to Mom, Deb made sure we were not burdening the nurses. However, on that last day, Deb was told the phone calls needed to stop. As a result, I told my brother who lives in California to call the next day but there wasn't a next day.

My sister and I both worked in healthcare for over 30 years. We know how stressful it is daily. A key part of the Never Alone Act addresses how a patient advocate would benefit the patient, the family **AND** the caregivers.

A patient advocate would have made such a difference in our Mother's story. The nurses who took care of Mom could not fill the void in her heart because of her family was not there.

Please do not let what happened to our Mother and so many other patients and families ever happen again. Our family is still broken over this tragedy. We know the importance of passing the Never Alone Act. Its implementation will help us heal and benefit so many.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this extremely important legislation. We would be happy to answer questions. We believe our combined healthcare experience (clinical and management) would be an asset going forward in the implementation of the Never Alone Act.

Respectfully Deborah Mikolajewski and Christine Mikolajewski

