

Thank you, Chairman Ginter, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Howse, and members of the House Aging and Long-Term Care Committee for allowing me to write to you in support of House Bill 770, the Essential Caregivers Act.

My interest in this bill is directly due to my parents, Charles “Chuck” and Dorothy Rout. They moved several years ago to a senior living “campus” where all phases of care can be accessed: Independent, Assistance, Rehabilitation, Memory Hall, and Skilled Nursing Care. They have made use of all of these levels during their time there. During this year they lived in Assistance (Chuck) and Memory Hall (Dorothy).

I hope committee members will consider several reasons for approving this bill and send it on to the Full House for consideration and passage.

Emotional Support

Since March of this year, I have not been able to visit either parent. This is their natural surroundings and would be best for them. This is where the most comfort comes to them. This is where the most emotional support and stimulation comes to them. This is where I can participate with them in various activities. And gave us, where needed, the ability to engage in confidential conversations. When it became clear that Dad had a short time to live, (he passed away July 7th) the only way I could spend time with him was by telephone calls.

Currently, I can see my mother in a designated space with the Coronavirus protocols in place. A volunteer brings her down in her wheelchair and we chat, supervised.

Authorized Support

I take my responsibility of Financial Power of Attorney (POA) and Health Care Power of Attorney (POA) very seriously. It bothers me I cannot observe their well keeping. I have no serious concerns, but that should not stop this committee from understanding the importance of family or other designated caregivers access to the ones they are committed to seeing. We are a third party, not staff, and should be allowed to evaluate the environment, meals, activities, etc. of those who have asked us to help them.

At the time of Chuck’s death, I was not allowed to pack up his apartment. Only staff could. The room remained unlocked from the time my father passed away to the time I met staff at the loading dock with the contents. The time lapse was 21 days.

I thank you for giving me an opportunity to bring to the committee specific information. Anecdotal, real-time information plus the statistics you have at your disposal hopefully will combine to support this timely bill.

Emily Scardena

