

My name is Rebecca Toman, a mother and registered nurse from Mahoning County. I am testifying on behalf of my husband and myself in support of HB 770.

My youngest daughter, Sephora has profound disabilities. She has a seizure disorder, cortical blindness, cerebral palsy, relies upon a wheelchair, and is at a two-month developmental level.

Sephora resides at the Hattie Larlham Center for Children with Disabilities, an ICF facility, in Mantua, Ohio. We consider Hattie our second home, the caregivers that tend to her, family. We are so blessed to have Hattie Larlham caring for our daughter's medical, nursing and general holistic well-being.

The mandated shutdown of ICF facilities in March has really blocked our ability to interact with our daughter. Due to her multiple disabilities, especially her visual impairment, her sense of touch is how she communicates and relates with her world. In normal interactions, Sephora, will hold my hand or reach for her father's beard to express herself and sense she is with her parents. Six feet distance visitation that rely on verbal communication does not align with Sephora's mode of communication.

In the state of Ohio, under the Duties and Responsibilities of a Guardian of the Person, which my husband and I took an oath to abide, it states our responsibility is "to visit regularly and ensure that the ward is safe and free from abuse or neglect". Because my daughter is non-verbal, it has always been my role to ensure her safety, well-being, and advocate for her needs. This extended shutdown has impaired my ability to do so.

Since there appears to be no end date for these ICF lockdown regulations, there must be a working means Sephora can interact with her parents in the way *she* communicates with her environment. If the ICF's continue to shut down, the guardian must be allowed a more personal access to their resident and his/her immediate surroundings.

Please consider passing this bill and allowing an "essential caregiver" to allow access to our residents in an ICF.

Sincerely, Rebecca Toman and Robert Toman

