



ELDERLY ADVOCATES
Dedicated to Quality Care in Ohio

www.elderlyadvocates.org

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Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health committee, my name is Paula Mueller, and I am the President of Elderly Advocates, which is a non-partisan non-profit advocacy group in Ohio. I would like to thank you for bringing Senate Bill 58 before this committee and allowing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of Elderly Advocates as an interested party.

Although none of us were prepared for the pandemic that hit us over a year ago, our state shined in the handling of many challenges. However, many families feel we did not shine when it came to long-term care. First there was the immunity law that protected businesses but had no protections for our most vulnerable in long-term care. Then staffing requirements were gone. Next came little or no outside oversight from anyone including the families that were locked out. Families have been very restricted in assisting, supporting, and helping their family members for well over a year now who were crucial to their loved ones long before the pandemic. Many families lost meaningful monitoring of their family members. Some families only saw their loved one two times in a year before they died if that. Many family members died alone in long-term care. This is not the way anyone should leave this world when there are solutions. Electronic Monitoring in rooms would have been of great assistance in these extremely difficult times. Now, over a year later, even with the vaccine that our Governor has told us will stop us from getting or spreading covid, the visiting restrictions continue without any explanation as to why or what it will take to end the orders. The families helped ensure the residents were vaccinated. Many of the family felt if they got the vaccine, that would end the orders. But time, and time again they are left with very restricted visiting and no confidence or hope of the situation improving. The residents and families have been through a lot. **Many families say they are at their "wits end."**

The pandemic clearly demonstrated the **urgent need for these cameras now** and it would ensure that if something like this pandemic happens again, residents can still depend on their primary support person to help, assist, and advocate for them. They would never be cut off from their families the way they were since the pandemic started.

This legislation is important to protect residents and help stressed out families. Many states have led the way in allowing electronic monitoring in residents rooms. We hope Ohio will join these other states in protecting residents. This is a way for the family to monitor their loved ones physical and mental health and their overall wellbeing. If a resident is in distress and it is seen on a camera, it gives the family a chance to call the nurses station to get their loved one help. **Families do not want cameras to engage lawsuits, they want cameras to have a chance to avoid a bad outcome.**



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We agree with Steve Piskor, who has initiated the need for Esther's law, in his mother's name in that camera **should not be** limited to use by Guardians only. We also feel the proper individuals to install cameras should be the resident, or the authorized representative such as a POA, healthcare POA, Guardian or person designated by the resident as their representative. We also agree with all he said about privacy issues are the decision of the resident or resident representative. The roommate will be protected as well. We also would like to mention that there are curtains in rooms that can be pulled if requested by the resident or resident representative for more sensitive care.

This legislation being passed will provide the families with a way to assist, support, always help and advocate for their loved one especially as in this pandemic. This law is desperately needed. The families have been patient and have done all that was asked of them. Now, families are asking you to pass HB 58 which is long overdue.

Thank you for allowing our testimony. We would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Paula Mueller, President
Elderly Advocates