

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide support testimony for HB 236; “The Never Alone Act.”

In January 2021, my husband suffered a stress induced event at our home. He was transported to the local hospital. I was not allowed to travel by ambulance with him nor meet him at the hospital. I was not allowed to be present during any tests or treatment. Knowing I was not able to help him advocate for his care was extremely stressful for us both. During the incident and while en route to the hospital he was non-verbal. Thankfully, upon arrival he became more alert and responsive. However, in the rush of getting him care, I did not think to provide him with his cell phone and it was extremely difficult to get any update from the hospital. On more than one occasion I was met with a particularly nasty nurse who acted as if I was a burden for calling to inquire about my husband’s condition. Upon discharge, my husband was still not 100% and when I asked him to relay what treatment he received and what the follow-up protocol was, he was not able to clearly describe either. It would have been very beneficial to have a second set of ears on that.

While our case is unique in that it was temporary, it offered a glimpse into the lives and difficulties of what many families facing long term health events or end of life seasons endure.

Because of our experience and those I have heard from friends and family over the last few years, I strongly believe that Ohioans (or rather every human) need the ability to have access to a loved one to advocate for and comfort them during a health crisis and at the end of life.

I ask the committee members to please vote yes on HB 236.

Sincerely, Jacquelin Zubko-Cunha (Medina, Ohio)

