

## Roers, Kristin

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**From:** galsters@ndsupernet.com  
**nt:** Sunday, January 17, 2021 3:31 PM  
**o:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** SB 2145 -please pass

\*\*\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

My father has been a resident in a skilled nursing facility since October 2019 and the past 10 months have been horrifying to his mental well-being, his physical health and to his overall emotional state.

Please understand how devastating the isolation has been on these older people. they are near the end of life and the only things they look forward to are visits from family and friends, to be able to see and hug their grandchildren and to know that they are not alone, left to die. But due to the virus that is exactly what has happened and when I go to see my father through his window and reaches his hand out to me and cries "help me, help me" and there is nothing that I can do. Do you know and understand how heartbreaking it is. I call him on the phone and he tells me "I don't like being alone".

The family members that are in charge of their parents care as POA cannot even see them in person, to see how frail they have become, due to the limitations of nursing home staffing and the CDC regulations more and more elderly people are dying. not because they have gotten the virus but as victims to the consequences from the virus. It should be every family members right to protect and care for their loved one in person, not through a window or a zoom meeting.

Please give these people their right to a life back. they do not deserve to be isolated like the most dangerous criminals earth in prisons.

I would love to come and testify in person on behalf of dozens of friends who are in the same situation and many have already lost their parents to this dreadful fight; but I must be here to stand outside my father's window each and every day to help him find peace and the will to go on until we can be together again in person.

Thank you.

LeeAnn Galster, Dickinson, ND 701-290-4382  
My father is at St Benedict's Health Center

**Roers, Kristin**

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**From:** Deb Leingang <debleingang@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 16, 2021 5:22 PM  
**To:** Beth Sanford; Jones, Chris D.; Burgum, Doug; Peterson, Shelly; Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** Resident letter

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On behalf of my Mom, Virginia Geist, 2425 Hillview ave, Bismarck, as told to me, Debra Leingang, 409 Keidel Trail Sw, Mandan: This is her true & sworn statement.

My life in 2020 started out with losing my husband of almost 60 yrs on Jan 22. We shared a room in a skilled nursing facility for almost 3 yrs. My daughters visited me daily to help me through the loss.

Then in March 2020, the facility was "LOCKED DOWN"! I not only lost my husband but now my family!

We have had very few video visits, very few outdoor visits - visits with no privacy & over a fence, few window visits because the window is on roommates side with her bed along the window.

I am VERY LONELY, DEPRESSED, have a hard time getting out of bed daily for What?! No activities, no socialization, NO FAMILY! I feel like I'm in jail, on my last leg of living. The door is closed most of the time, all meals (not always hot either) in room, only getting out for baths & therapy when provided, but mostly that in room also. No fresh air, no sun. THIS IS NO QUALITY OF LIFE!!

I've had to go through all The FIRSTS AFTER LOSING A SPOUSE BY MYSELF! I'm missing out on the great grandkids growing up & their birthdays - ages 2 1/2 to 6 1/2! I NEED MY FAMILY TO TOUCH & HUG!

This is my last home & I want QUALITY of life in my last days however long that may be.

PLEASE OPEN UP THE FACILITIES & LET US BE WITH ALL OF OUR FAMILIES!

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

## Roers, Kristin

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**From:** Kim Johnston <steve2kim@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 16, 2021 3:18 PM  
**To:** nd.bethsanford@gmail.com; Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** Isolation is HeartBreaking....

\*\*\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

My Mom is being locked away from her family and loved ones now for 10 months and counting...why and when will this end.

My Mom has been the center of our Family... Wife, Mother, Grandma and now she sits alone away from the family visits and waits for

a scheduled window visit that in itself is frustrating as she has cataracts and unable to see distances and not allowed to be pushed closer

to window as a policy/rule set in place states she can't....So she can't see clearly and hearing is always a struggle can't read lips to help her

understand as she and the visitor are having to wear masks...So a visit is overwhelming for her and she cries for the ones she longs to see..

My Mom is not the same Mom you have locked away from us...She is lonesome ,sad, depressed and cries because she is all these things,

she is broken and has physically declined in these past 10 months....With no fault of her own but because of restrictions keeping her isolated

from Family.....

I have asked over and over WHY the PPE staff is using to protect the residents, WHY can't a family member be able to use THAT EXACT PPE

to be in contact with a resident?? It makes absolutely NO SENSE to me and countless others ....Tell me WHY can't this happen!

What is the reason...

If its approved PPE and good enough for staff daily contact, there should be no reason it's not for a Family member?

One family member accessed to a loved one can't be out of the question...If so, please explain Why.

My Mom has more life behind her ,than she has in front of her,

she doesn't want to spend the days left to her, alone and isolated from the Family

she has spent her life loving.

This is so cruel, please reconsider this isolation and lockdown of our elders....

Kim Johnston,  
Loved Daughter of Lola

Senators, K. Roers, Mathern, Patten, and Representatives Keiser, Rohr, and Westlind, thank you for introducing Senate Bill 2145. Thank you for letting me share my story.

On a cold March day, it would be the last time I would sit with my mom during her noon meal, encouraging her to eat, and sharing family stories and laughs. Providing this companionship and joy for her was all she had. I did not know it would be the last time to help her brush her teeth, help the CNA take her to the bathroom, wash her hands, give her a big hug, tuck her into bed for an afternoon nap, and tell her how much I love her. I waved goodbye that day as she smiled her beautiful smile back at me and said, "I love you Sharon! I wish you could stay!" I smiled back through tears, "I will see you tomorrow mom, I will be back." The next day, the unexpected call came, that no visits could take place. The doors of the long-term care facility were locked. A sign on the door stated No Visits Allowed. They had a contracted employee test positive for COVID-19.

I always visited my mom, almost daily, because I knew she was not getting the basic care she deserved. Basic care! To be taken to the bathroom throughout the day, to be helped at mealtimes, to be provided with a call light, and to have her teeth brushed, because she would pocket food in her mouth, from not chewing and swallowing so well anymore. No one would wash her hands before meals and after meals, or after being helped in the bathroom. I witnessed this daily when I could visit. So, I would provide as much care as I could. I would brush her teeth, wipe off the narrow dirty metal shelf that was her place in the shared bathroom to keep her toothbrush. I would position the toothbrush in a way that I could tell if someone moved it or took the time to brush her teeth. Every day, the toothbrush was in the same place, dry and stiff, unused. How disappointing. I took my concerns to every care conference for my mom, with nods of heads from managers and care takers, saying it would be taken care of. It was not!

She was in lock down now. I could not physically help her, so I made phone calls to the facility to double check that her plan of care was being followed, that she was taken to the bathroom every 2 hours. I worried about her skin and the breakdown that would occur if she sat in urine all day. Again, I was told, it was taken care of. I was not there to advocate for her, to be with her, and care for her. Who was going to do this? Adequate staffing was needed.

I continue to worry, because on several occasions she had fallen, trying to go to the bathroom herself. More than once she ended up at the emergency room. A deep open cut in her forehead, needing several stitches, and pain medication. A black eye engulfed her face. She has now fallen several times trying to get to the bathroom. I panic every time the phone number comes across my phone. Now what happened? Is my mom okay? Is she safe? I asked the facility director if I could come in and volunteer and help in any way. I am a nurse and educator. I am screening for COVID-19, I have minimized my risks, and would follow policies and protocols. I just want to help and be an extra set of eyes and hands and sit and visit with my mom and any residents that would enjoy a visit. The answer was, "No." The director said, "If you want to be here, then apply for a nursing position. We need nurses."

With the doors locked and new guidelines in place, and no visits allowed, I signed up for Facetime visits with my mom, so I could see her and check in. She would look so lost and bewildered and would wonder why I was not there. She did not understand why I could not be with her. When I would see her on the screen, I would be devastated. Her glasses were crooked, her hair not brushed, food and juice down her face, and food on her shirt. I told her stories and comforting words, I told her I loved her, trying to catch a smile. Her teeth were covered in food. No sweater or light jacket on, as I requested, because she was always cold. Did anyone notice or care? What is happening? My mom cared for her son, my brother with disabilities, for over 50 years, and now it was her time to be cared for. When we moved my mom in to the facility, I was told by the nursing director of the unit that she is in a good place and that they would take good care of her. She told me "don't worry, she is in good hands." Why are they not providing the care they promised? Why is the mission and vision statements of their facility, that are placed on the walls and website, not being followed? Where is the accountability? They are caring for my mother. She is not only a mother, but grandmother, and great grandmother and a beautiful and loving woman. She dedicated her life to care for her son with disabilities. She was a caretaker herself.

In November, she acquired COVID-19. Facility acquired COVID-19! No updates were given except for the initial call, "Your mom has COVID, and has been moved into the COVID unit." Over 30 residents died of COVID-19 there in a few short months. COVID was brought to them. My mom survived. I was told I could visit at her window. Standing again in the cold, I came to her window, she was eating her lunch, alone in the room. She saw me and cried and motioned for me to come in! She continued to motion to come in and all I could do was say, "I'm sorry, I can't." She has been declining these past months, and after finishing her quarantine and getting through COVID-19, she continues to decline. How long do I need to wait to see her? How much does she have to decline before I can be with her? Until she is dying? I am her POA and would love to be her "designated caregiver." She deserves the presence of her family, so does every resident in a long-term care facility in the state of North Dakota. Other states have figured this out, including Minnesota, and recognize the critical role family members and others have in the care and support of their loved one. Efforts that have been made to protect residents have failed to consider the physical and psychological impact of separation from those that matter most. I urge you to help pass SB 2145, so that my mother and all of our community members in long term care facilities, in North Dakota, can have the comfort and support of a "designated caregiver" now, when they need them most.

Thank you for introducing SB 2145.

Respectfully, Sharon Nelson, Ph.D., RN

Senators, K. Roers, Mathern, Patten, and Representatives Keiser, Rohr, and Westlind, thank you for introducing Senate Bill 2145. Thank you for letting me share my story.

On a cold March day, it would be the last time I would sit with my mom during her noon meal, encouraging her to eat, and sharing family stories and laughs. Providing this companionship and joy for her was all she had. I did not know it would be the last time to help her brush her teeth, help the CNA take her to the bathroom, wash her hands, give her a big hug, tuck her into bed for an afternoon nap, and tell her how much I love her. I waved goodbye that day as she smiled her beautiful smile back at me and said, "I love you Sharon! I wish you could stay!" I smiled back through tears, "I will see you tomorrow mom, I will be back." The next day, the unexpected call came, that no visits could take place. The doors of the long-term care facility were locked. A sign on the door stated No Visits Allowed. They had a contracted employee test positive for COVID-19.

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Thank you for introducing SB 2145.

Respectfully, Sharon Nelson, Ph.D., RN

## Roers, Kristin

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**From:** June Lundstrom <leostrong3120@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 15, 2021 5:18 PM  
**To:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** Elder neglect in nursing homes

\*\*\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

Hello Kristin,

I was given your contact as I was told you are gathering information regarding neglect; abuse and other items happening in nursing homes.

Bethany University in Fargo:

My mother, Judith Meyers "Judy", entered Bethany September 25, 2020 - due to their actions and LACK of, they euthanized her by December 18, 2020.

Prior to entering Bethany she was living and caring for herself with little assistance. She was independent in everything for the exception of her macular degeneration eyesight.

Bethany:

- refused to release her to go to dr for her regularly scheduled eye injections that would SLOW her macular degeneration.
- refused to release her to have her hearing assessment for hearing aids.
- refused to release her to ANY dr appointments; one being a specialist in non invasive management of her mitral valve and A-fib and others
- refused to discuss her cares or ANY aspect of her cares, meds, appointments etc etc etc
- refused to clarify medications, especially care plan for "fluid" weight (to safely reduce and get fluid off); and "restless leg" syndrome.
- placed in Lasix for fluid (dangerously extreme high doses) causing EXTREME side effects such as: dangerously morbid depletion of potassium and other "life survival" electrolytes. Causing increased exacerbation of restless legs, that kept her up without sleeping WHY WOULDN't they send her for dialysis to help with fluid overload???? WHY could Sanford be able to reverse this affect in 3 days and Bethany KILLED my mother in 3 months!!!! With that 50 pound weight gain; electrolyte imbalance including anemia!!!!
- refused to manage prescribed diet for health conditions
- Refused to allow referrals; second opinions etc
  
- Judy express concerns for them "not doing anything"; "not getting answers"; "they didn't tell me, I know nothing" etc etc etc.
- Judy was extremely concerned with her weight. They said it was "fluid".
- Judy complained about all the meds she was on and didn't know what they were for.

NOTE: Judy stated she was up 50 pounds the week she passed away.

Dawn Hummel, Director called and VERBALLY ABUSED; INTIMATED; BULLIED and THREATENED me, inly days after my mother's death, as I tried to retrieve a Christmas tree and emoji towels that Bethany had MISPLACED and was not among my mother's belongings.



In stead of assisting with resolving the tree and towels, Dawn attacked me re: not being rehire-able and she VAGUELY and insinuated an incident 10 years ago.

id remind her that that incident was Bethany refusing and delaying care of a resident that sustained an OPEN hip fracture more that 24 hours AFTER it happened.

I.e. incident about 10 years ago

- resident fall
- resident was accepted by dr
- dr called ER and ER was accepted resident
- I faxed accepting physician orders to both ER dr and Ambulance
- waited for Bethany Administrator to call back and approve sending resident into ER per physician orders etc.
- Bethany Administrator REFUSED to send resident in.
- over 24 hours later; upon arrival at work (Bethany); Resident has JUST been sent for medical treatment; her husband called later and stated it was an open hip fracture but because Bethany had fed her, she still couldn't have the surgery for hours because Bethany had fed her.
- when I have report yo night shift; the orientee spoke with me privately and stated; her preceptor didn't check on the resident who had fallen until around 4am; the wound on the hip was indeed open, the bandage over the wound was "very bloody"; but the nurse only steri stripped it, rebadged it; gave her Tylenol for pain. AGAIN resident was NOT sent in.

I wrote this incident up and placed it in the unit manager's desk. Next Dawn Hummel and HR met with me. Dawn asked if I reported it to the state; "are you going to report it to the state"; "your in nursing school aren't you"; "if you value your nursing license you won't tell the state". I tried tell her, that I reported it to management; that it's there job to review what happened and make changes in the process. Dawn again in a louder more threatening tone "you better not report this to the state"... next I was being walked to get my things snd out the door.

Back to what happened when I was trying to retrieve the Christmas tree and towel. Dawn continued to badger me. She stated that "we pulled your file...." I finally told her... "Dawn.... my mother is dead, I was here to simply retrieve the tree and towels my daughter so thoughtful was trying to get to her grandma but it never got there.... and your talking to me like this?"

By Dawn's statement; her tone; her INTIMIDATION, her BULLYING THREATENING manner is NOT isolated to me but to ALL those around her. That by her stating "we pulled your file" I believe Dawn's PERSONAL FEELINGS about me, INTERFERED with ANY staff doing there job for my mother, Judith Meyers. I believe the staff were filling DAWN's "orders" and euthanasia groups my mother.

Please assist me in creating CHANGE in nursing homes. I've worked in them, they are not all what has happened to me, my family and my mother. But with leadership like Dawn, her behaviors filter into a toxic detrimental environment, that breeds mismanagement of cares.

Thank you for your time and reading some of my experiences. While I mourn what has happened to my mother, that strains my family relationships as Bethany drove a huge wedge and played family members against family members. Help break these cycles. We never know how much time our loved ones have left. We should NOT be spending any time like my family and my mother did, those last 3 months.

I whole heartedly believe if she has NOT been at Bethany, she would still be alive and living independently.

Sincerely,

June Lundstrom

1511 34th Ave S  
Fargo, ND. 58104  
[Leostrong3120@gmail.com](mailto:Leostrong3120@gmail.com)  
701-446-6103

## Roers, Kristin

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**From:** Craig & Kristi Thomas <crkrthomas@gmail.com>  
**nt:** Friday, January 15, 2021 3:55 PM  
**o:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** SB2145

\*\*\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

Dear Senator Roers,

My name is Kristine Thomas. I am a nursing student. Our family experienced the unexpected death of our daughter in May 2020, due to a brain tumor while she was in a North Dakota hospital. Our grief has been exponentially compounded by the fact that my husband and I were prevented from appropriately being together with our children and extended family members as we prayed for a miracle during the five days that she lay comatose in the hospital. Finally, due to our insistence, our children and their grandmother were permitted to come and see their sister/granddaughter briefly for the last time as it was clear that our daughter was not going to survive.

As a nursing student, I recognize that COVID is a serious illness, and I understand the difficult position that care facilities are in. I also know from my studies that nurses are called to take a holistic approach to healthcare. People need their loved ones, especially during difficult times. It is inhumane to keep people in long-term facilities from their loved ones. That is why I support SB2145.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Kristine Thomas

I am asking for your support of Senate Bill No. 2145.

Having a designated caregiver during a declaration of disaster or emergency is a win/win situation for all.

Watching and communicating with my father and staff through a window for nine months was not pleasant. My father passed away on Thanksgiving Day. He was Covid free, and right up to the end we were not allowed to be with him. Many of these facilities are short staffed and they are not able to give the care required to residents. Residents are so sad and lonely, and starving for attention. If staff did give my dad 30 seconds of their time, I could see the sparkle in his eyes that someone communicated with him and gave him some attention.

Having a designated caregiver would be helpful in so many ways. It would free up time for staff. One day a worker was in the room for a half hour trying to get an oxygen reading on my dad, as their checker never seemed to work properly. That is something so simple a caregiver could help with. Loved ones can help with meals. They could make sure the oxygen is in their nose, instead of as I witnessed when I would call and ask the nurse to put it back in, she would say "Well, he keeps taking it out!" A caregiver could give quality, one on one time to their loved one, reading, conversing, simple physical and occupational therapy, and giving human touch, something they all need.

We were almost glad when he went to the hospital during the past nine months and we could be in the hospital with him. We gave him a haircut, fixed his wheelchair, brought him an ice cream cone, etc. It was amazing to see how clear his head was and the good mood he was in when family was with him. There were also some sad things we discovered during a couple of hospital visits. One was his toenails had not been cut for 2 ½ years. Yes, 2 ½ years! During one of his last trips to the hospital, I saw his bed sores firsthand in ER. Blood running down his butt, raw in another area, and a larger area that was red and purple, bruised looking. Absolutely no reason for a person to get bed sores of this magnitude! Residents are not being checked, turned or tended to. A crucial reason a caregiver needs to be with their loved one.

My dad fiercely loved his kids. Having him motion to you every day through the window to come in, and every day telling him we can't come in, and watching him deteriorate as the months went by, is indescribable and unforgiveable. He, as well as many of the residents in these homes, would much rather have a family member with them than to be alone and/or die alone in isolation.

Being in a facility that was rated in the top five worst in the state, it was crucial that we be there by his side every day. Pre-Covid, my siblings and I spent around seven hours every day with him, and during Covid, around five hours every day outside his window.

If a family member could be with their loved one, they are going to take every precaution to protect them. It is a disgrace to have tortured so many of these people with making them spend their final time on earth alone, when all they wanted was to have their family beside them.

I ask you to please support Senate Bill 2145.

Lisa Moldenhauer  
8200 66<sup>th</sup> Ave SE  
Minot, ND 58701

I am writing in support of SB2145.

Our mother, grandma, great grandma lives in the Horizon Assisted Living in Watford City.

She is 91 years old, witty and good natured. She has an amazing spirit and has worked hard to make the best of this lock down and tried not to let it get her down. Despite her good attitude she has declined significantly during the months of lock down, both physically and mentally.

She is fortunate to have 4 children & their spouses, several grand and great grandkids very close to visit and be part of their lives. The outdoor visits worked ok for her although hardly ideal. Depending on the weather, distance and face masks made it very difficult to communicate along with poor hearing.

Despite being completely isolated from her loved ones, she still contracted Covid 19. So, after months of not being able to be with her we had to life flight her to Fargo for her to be alone for another couple weeks. God granted her the strength to get through and she is now recovering, on oxygen, at her home at the horizon. Fortunately, we are able to see her 2 people at a time with precautions. If that were to be taken away due to surge in cases or whatever, she wouldn't last long there. Without family interaction and help she would soon be in the nursing home.

As good as employees can be (and that's in fortunate cases) they can not replace the everyday needs that a family member can provide. Just the connection with the rest of the family, opening mail together, taking care of business, sorting & changing out seasonal clothing to name a few. Everyday things that keep us all getting up in the morning makes a huge difference in their mental and physical wellbeing. Also, as much as we would like to think all facilities are looking out for them, things fall between the cracks and if they can't speak for themselves how far can it go and how quickly can they decline? There needs to be someone to be their advocate.

This has been so terribly hard on families. I can't even imagine being kept from my spouse when you know you have little time left anyway. There is NO WAY that can be in anyones best interest.

SB2415 provides connection with family. The restrictions of the designated family member are as stringent or more than the employees caring for them. I often wonder how taking a CNA course magically makes one less contagious than a loved one who will go through any measure to be safe and still not be able to even enter the building. Thank God for the CNAs and all healthcare workers, but they get off work, go on with their daily lives and then come back to work the next day. There are no guarantees they are disease free, there is risk of exposure for all. The numbers prove that.

Limiting exposure is good. But being 100% isolated from family/caregiver is never good and should not be allowed. SB2145 would guarantee they have the simple right to a personal representative!

Respectfully,

Jennifer Sorenson  
701-770-6858  
12652 22<sup>nd</sup> St NW  
Watford City, ND 58854

**Roers, Kristin**

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**From:** Rosemary Ames <rosemaryames@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 11:52 AM  
**To:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** SB2145

\*\*\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

Dear Senator Roers,

I am emailing about the lack of being able to visit our loved ones in LTC from March 2020-Present. My Mother has been in Memory Care in a LTC in Fargo. It has been difficult to visit my Mother during this time without being hackled to get a test even though I have never had the virus and also restricted on how long I could visit. From March-May the facility was completely closed to visitors of any kind. In August my Father passed away due to complications from knee surgery. I have 3 other siblings and they live out of state, and I live 3 hours away from Fargo. When my Father passed away on a Monday, my sister flew in so we could be with our Mother, which was on Wed. We were almost not let in to visit, even though my sister had cleared it with the social worker. After getting the running around for an hour we finally got the go ahead to visit, but had to leave by 6:00. We had the same experience the following day on Thursday with having to leave again at 6:00. On Friday our Mother asked us if she could come help pick out our Father's casket, and we said as far as we were concerned she could, but sought permission (this broke my heart to hear her ask and beg if she could). She was cleared to do so and we picked her up and we went to take make funeral arrangements for our dad, her husband. Again we had to have her back by 6:00, and they took her straight to quarantine, despite she was only with myself, sister, brother and the funeral director. Our plan was to visit our Mother everyday through the day of the funeral, but we were not allowed by the Administrator to visit on Saturday and Sunday. Come Monday, the day of the funeral we took our Mother out for the funeral, and again had to have her back by 6:00. Again when bringing her back, they immediately took her to quarantine and were going to test her 2x week during this quarantine period. As of today my Mother has never had the virus! A month later in mid September I was able to visit during a 1 hour window (1 hour only). From after that date in September until now I have not been able to visit my Mother. Unless you are heckled to TEST, TEST, TEST! We have lost a whole year due to a virus that has a 99.9% recovery rate! My Mother has dementia, and we have lost a whole year of being with our loved ones, who we have entrusted to these facilities to care for loved ones! We have no idea when God will call us to our forever home and as I said she has dementia is nearly 83 years old! Time to open up to being able to visit our loved ones anytime we want! My Mother isn't getting any younger and God could call her home anytime and I have lost valuable time with my Mother! If you want to know more, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Rosemary Ames

## Roers, Kristin

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**From:** Rhonda Larson <nyylover@srt.com>  
**nt:** Wednesday, January 13, 2021 10:08 PM  
**o:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** SB 2145

\*\*\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

Dear Senator Kristin Roers,

I have not had contact with my Mom, who is a resident in a Long Term Care Facility, for 10 months. During this time she has developed depression and sadness, she has not walked for 4 months, she has had numerous falls, I lost count after 15, her dementia has worsened, and she contracted COVID-19 from a staff member at this facility. The federal and state mandated visitor restriction are a violation of her rights by locking her up and isolating her against her wishes. She is a resident in a Long Term Care Facility which is her home, yet these federal and state mandated visitor restrictions are inhumane and abuse. She has rights that cannot be taken from her for any reason.

My Moms home was invaded with COVID-19 that started with a staff member. According to a CMS report about this facility 35 residents contracted COVID-19 and recovered, 10 residents contracted COVID-19 and died, and 25 staff members contracted COVID-19. This facility has 50 licensed beds with a daily average of 37 residents. According to this data there should now be minimal risk to my Mom and other residents but the lockdown and isolation continues. Why? These federal and state mandates cannot be a one size fits all approach. Anyone who has a loved one living in a Long Term Care Facility or provides care to these residents knows how important it is to them to have consistent and routine contact with their loved ones. My Mom should not be suffering in isolation when her risk or the risk to others is minimal at this point.

The constant and continuing response I receive from staff and administrators at this Long Term Care Facility is "We don't like it either but our hands are tied. We have to follow the Governor's Executive Order", or "We have to do this or we will lose Medicare funding", or "this is what the Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Health says we have to do." I am fed up with everyone passing the buck and not taking responsibility for the things they can control to improve the quality of life and ending this lockdown and abuse that is killing my Mom and so many others whose home happens to be in a Long Term Care Facility.

For the most part of the past 10 months the news of a vaccine has always been the solution to ending this pandemic and the lockdowns. My Mom has received the first dose and will get the second dose in the next week. I am hoping to be vaccinated as soon as I am allowed to get it. Now I am told that vaccinations will not end the lockdown of my Mom's home and visitor restrictions will continue. The CDC and other government bureaucracies have not provided any guidelines for Long Term Care Facilities post-vaccination other than all precautions should continue to protect this population.

It is shameful how this population has been locked away and forgotten with no regard for their human rights, dignity, and emotional well-being. Isolation and loneliness also kills not just COVID. This needs to end now!

Sincerely,  
Rhonda Larson  
20300 Hwy 83 South  
ax, ND. 58759  
/01-204-3609

## Roers, Kristin

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**From:** Tami <tstew5@midco.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 13, 2021 10:23 AM  
**To:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** LTCFACILITIES

\*\*\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

My Name is Tamara Stuhlmiller & Live in Bismarck ND. My Mother(89 years old) lives in an Assisted Living Facility also in Bismarck. I along with My Siblings Moved her 2 years ago their, & I have been her Main Caregiver Daily since the First Day Living their. I have done many cares & things Daily, 7 Days a Week, so to keep her their & Not in a Nursing Home. Which I will Not have her live in. I have been Locked out since 3/12/2020. It is Now 1/2021, & STILL LOCKED DOORS!! PLEASE HEAR MY VOICE!! These Facilities NEED to Unlock & Allow Family In to their Private Home!! Society can go to Stores, Restaurants, etc., Staff comes & goes!! What is WRONG with this?!!!! We are Killing our Elderly from Isolation & Depression and their Dignity is GONE!! My Mom Eats all Meals in her Room ALONE, they seldom take or do activities with my Mom. Thank GOD She has a Ground Level Home so I sit outside her Window off & on Every Day, Her Words are-"Come In, Come In"!! This has Broken my Heart over & over, I am exhausted!! We are allowed In Door Visitation Mon.-Fri., 10am-4pm, designated areas. No Weekends, No Holidays, due to Short of Help!!!! This is NOT MY FAULT they won't Hire enough Staff!! They have been Vaccinated & Test for COVID Weekly, still NO CHANGE!! PLEASE TELL ME WHY? Protecting Elderly- THIS IS NOT!! I also have been Locked out of In-laws Facility, We Lost my Husbands Father 3 Days before CHRISTMAS & My Mother In-law is still in Hospital, they both contacted COVID from Staff!!!! We ALL know COVID IS HERE, WE ALL KNOW IT'S ALSO HERE TO STAY, OPEN UP THESE LTC FACILITIES!!!! End of Story!! I also want to know about State Funded Ventilation System for LTC Facilities?!!  
Sent from my iPhone



## Roers, Kristin

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**From:** Glen/Lisa <glschmidt@bis.midco.net>  
**nt:** Wednesday, January 13, 2021 9:36 AM  
**o:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** Long term care plea

\*\*\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

Hello! Our dear mother was recently put in a nursing home. She was separated immediately from me and I wasn't even able to say goodbye and give her her things, after spending 3 grueling days in a hospital with her after she fell in her home. It was very traumatic and I had to stand in a snowbank outside her window in tears to say goodbye. This was down right mean and the nurses and workers even told me the policies are terrible for these precious elderly loved ones.

After this, she was quarantined. She had just had a negative covid test that very day and it made no sense. Rightly so, she started calling us, her loved ones, on the phone many times a day as she was so alone!

The confusion came a couple of days later when they called me saying she had a doctors appointment and that I could meet her at the clinic. I replied that I thought she was quarantined? They told me she "has the right to her health care" and they make exception for doctors appointments. I thought to myself, "Why can't she have just 2 or 3 family members come visit her, hug her, and sit with her then for her mental health?" Don't they have a "right" to that?

So, the supposed "quarantine" is of none effect because I went to her appointment with her and hugged on her and she as exposed to the public

These rules have no common sense and our elderly are dying alone of loneliness and neglect! Please, change these laws! Our dear mother would rather die of covid than not see her children and grandchildren!

Respectively,  
Lisa Schmidt

**Roers, Kristin**

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**From:** kim johnston <steve2kim@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 13, 2021 1:16 AM  
**To:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** Isolation & Depression

\*\*\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

My Mother has been locked away from her family for now going on 10 months .... She has lived her whole life up until this lockdown with Family.. now 83 years old and each day brings her closer to her end of life and she without any choice of her own is locked away .. She cries she is not happy and her smile is not there ... she needs family she needs our hugs as we need hers.. She has spent her life raising her children loving her Grandchildren and Great-children .. There is no reason that the same PPE that the staff is required to wear to protect the residents , that Family can't be able to be in contact with their loved ones using the same PPE. This is cruel to be locked away and families kept away while staff are in and out going to Walmart, Grocery stores, family get together etc. and then ok to enter and tend to my Mother with the PPE and I am not offered the same to enter wearing the same PPE ??? None of this is ok and has gone on way to long with no resolve... I can't get this time back with my Mom ... her days left are getting fewer ...and I want to be near her, there for her,as she has been for me... Thank you for your consideration.....

"Let Us In"

Loving Daughter of Lola,  
Kim Johnston

Sent from my iPhone

My name is Debra Leingang, address is 409 Keidel Trail Sw, Mandan, ND. 58554 & this is my true & sworn statement.

To say that 2020 was a challenging year doesn't even begin to describe the Hell that everyone is going through that has a loved one in a long term care facility.

My Dad passed away Jan 22, 2020. He shared a room with my Mom. I did daily visits with her to help her through this very difficult time - losing a spouse of almost 60 years. Then March comes around & the facility goes on "lockdown." NO VISITS! She had to go through all the firsts: first holidays, Dad's birthday, their anniversary - ALL ALONE! Very few video app visits which she cries every time because we can't be there in person, very few outside visits - over a fence, NO PRIVACY, also cries because we can't hug. Very few outside window visits because the window is on her roommate's side & cries when we say goodbye.

She is stuck in a tiny room, no activities, no socialization - her days are watching tv, coloring, putting puzzles together or just sleeping. Her mind isn't as sharp as it used to be & she dwells on things of the past. She is depressed, lonely & is losing muscle tone because of inactivity. She's missing out on grandkids & great grandkids, which range from 2 & 1/2 to 6 & 1/2: All who haven't been able to visit!

She had to put off medical care because she was told they couldn't let anyone in or out & didn't even get therapy for awhile.

She has stated numerous times that this isn't Quality of life. She would rather run the risk of getting the virus than not see family.

ALL the covid cases have been brought in by staff. It angers me because the staff is allowed to have other part-time jobs outside of Healthcare or frequent bars or restaurants, where we the family won't put ourselves at risk so we can visit!

I finally told her to make & go to her dr appointments even if she is quarantined afterwards because she has been anyways for most of the year.

She is stuck in her room, with a roommate that barely speaks, has all meals in her room & never gets any fresh air, activities or socialization. WHAT KIND OF LIFE IS THAT!

The vaccine isn't an option right now because of reactions to others & no studies have been done on people with crohns, parkinsons or have had strokes.

She is to the point of going out of her room with a mask on because "SHE HAS RIGHTS & IS GOING TO EXERCISE THOSE RIGHTS!"

So PLEASE OPEN UP & LET the Families in to SPEND WHATEVER TIME OUR LOVED ONES HAVE LEFT TOGETHER!

THANK YOU,

DEBRA L LEINGANG

To: All members of the North Dakota State Legislature

From: Mary Kaye Hjelle  
1809 Heritage Avenue  
Bismarck ND 58501  
701-400-6954

I am writing to request that your body will enact a measure or measures that would help alleviate the extreme isolation that thousands of our elderly, residents of care facilities, are being forced to endure now, as well as in the past months, since the pandemic caused these facilities to cut off most contact from family and loved ones.

These people, many who do not understand why, have been denied the comfort and solace that in-person physical contact with those they love can provide. In many cases this has caused great emotional distress and severe depression. This lack of contact can even accelerate cognitive loss.

I was able to have a handful of indoor 30 minute visits with my 88 year old mother at one point this past summer which since have been discontinued. In addition we were able to visit face to face once or twice a week outdoors for 30 minutes when the weather was nice and no physical contact was permitted. Now that winter has arrived I am forced to visit her at her ground floor window when the weather allows, which now is difficult and in a normal ND winter would be impossible. Those who do not have accessible ground floor windows are even more severely isolated.

When she sees me at her window she's all smiles and motions for me to come in, I get her on the phone and tell her "mom I can't because of the virus". It is heartbreaking to see the wind go out of her sails when I tell her I can't come in yet. Or when I call her from my home to say hi and check on her, she will tell me to come over later and visit. I tell her I will but I have to visit at the window. She says there is no excitement or anything to look forward to any more.

I do not take issue with the care my mother has received, but personal access to her room to comfort her with my touch and words of love, as well as family news would make a huge difference in her mental as well as physical health.

I would ask that at least one "essential care giver" (a family member and one backup person) should be designated for each resident. Someone allowed to enter their room at any given time, with appropriate PPE and monitoring, in order to provide the comfort I have described, as well to maintain and monitor their physical health and the condition of their room and possessions.

I know that these essential caregivers would use at least as much caution, IF NOT MORE, when outside these facilities to avoid infection than those employed by the institutions.

My good friend was recently allowed a compassion visit with her elderly mother, who wouldn't stop crying, in a Bismarck facility. When her mother saw her she said "Where have you been, I thought you forgot about me." IS THIS HOW WE WANT THOSE WHO BUILT OUR STATE TO PASS THEIR FINAL MONTHS OR YEARS?

I think not, and am sure you agree. You can do something about it, I can't. PLEASE HELP!!!

I, Mary Kaye Hjelle, state that this is my sworn testimony, January 9, 2021

## Roers, Kristin

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**From:** Terri LeGrand <tlegrand5@icloud.com>  
**Content:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:33 PM  
**To:** Roers, Kristin  
**Subject:** Bill 2145

\*\*\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an outside source. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know they are safe. \*\*\*\*\*

Greetings Senator Roers,

I am writing in support of your bill soon to be heard. I have a mother in the Sheyenne Care Center in Valley City and have been in numerous conversations with the administrator, Craig Christianson since March. He dug his heels in right away and has continued to not be willing to hear my concerns or budge. Mr. Christianson has often told me that he has to follow what the VP3 task force is telling him and has also stated that his hands are tied by CMS because his actions can affect funding.

They have been in lock down a large part of the time since the pandemic was declared in March. My mother was failing by the week, not being able to have me there to spend time with her and to advocate for her. While the rest of the world was trying to return to normalcy, residents at Sheyenne Care Center were at the mercy of Mr. Christianson's decisions. As more and more staff were testing positive for Covid, the rest of us were kept out of the facility. They did go through a period of breakout with both staff and residents in November, shortly after I took my Mom out for a therapeutic leave.

I could not stand to see what was happening with my mother and begged for there to be at least allowance for one essential caregiver to be able to come in. I was willing to follow whatever testing and following of masking, etc. procedures necessary to just be with her in her room. There was no concession on the care center's part, so on Nov. 4, I took my Mom out and we have been paying a bed hold daily fee since. I did my best to provide the care she needed, as difficult as it has been.

On Christmas Eve, she fell at my home and broke her leg. At 90 years of age, she chose not to have surgery and has been in the hospital in Fargo since. About a week and a half ago, I moved her to the Sanford Hospice House (still in the hospital setting) because in this setting, I am allowed to be with her and she can have two other visitors each day. So, with an added daily expense, at least I can be with her and still be her advocate.

I cannot take her home with me again and therefore, she needs to return to the care center. We are looking at a return date of Jan. 18. She has to be in bed and there is probably at least another 2 months of healing left for her. After having her with me the months of November and December and after now being with her around the clock since being admitted to the hospital after her fall, it is hard to imagine not being to do anything but see her through her nursing home window! I cannot put my life on hold anymore, but without her being able to have me visit her, i am so torn! I have talked with the Ombudsman representative for Sheyenne Care Center, Mark Jesser, to be an advocate for me for allowance for compassionate care visits. He was in conversation with Mr. Christianson today and again, no willingness on Mr. Christianson's part to allow even compassionate care visits.

I will be calling Mr. Christianson again myself tomorrow. I am so frustrated with all of this! CMS has stated in their guidelines that compassionate care visits should be allowed.

Thank you for introducing this bill. I do hope my mother lives long enough for me to see this situation resolved.

Terri LeGrand

