

Members of the Senate Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you why I would like to see House Bill #2145 passed.

Both of my parents live in the Horizon an Assisted Care Facility in Watford City. Prior to Covid-19, they were accepting of their health limitations and for the most part were enjoying living in this facility. Since March of last year I have seen a dramatic change in both parents. For months we could not go in to see them or help them with finances, household issues etc. This became very upsetting to them. They became fearful and anxious. During this period my mother had medical episodes that should have put her in the hospital but because of Covid-19 they sent her back to her apartment with orders for 24 hour care which is not provided. I am their primary support for health care and pleaded to let me go into the apartment to be the 24 hour supervision she needed but they repeatedly said NO. Because of this failure to provide adequate medical care she ended up with complications that put her back in ER. This same thing happened to my father. I do not understand how my coming into their apartment would put any body at more risk than them being taken to the ER and Hospital for Lab work and x-rays that would not have been needed if adequate care had been provided. Assistance was only provided from 8:00-4:30. My parents lived in fear for months during the lockdown afraid that if they did something wrong they would be kicked out of their apartment and they would have nowhere to live. My father had permission to walk the halls with his mask as it is medically necessary to keep his anxiety under control. He was afraid to even do that because he thought someone might see him and tell on him. (Which they did) They have gotten to the point they don't dare do anything without asking. The Facility stresses their wishes in a way to the residents that it intimidates them and makes them fearful.

When the State finally decided that Assisted Living should be separate from LTC. The Staff of the Horizon went in and went over the new regulations with the residents. They pretty much told the residents that they could not make them follow the same rules but for their protection they certainly would STRONGLY suggest they follow them. After repeated times of telling my parents that now they can have company in their apartment and they can have coffee, they still ask. The answer is "We strongly suggest that you don't". I have told them many

times that they can have anyone they want in their apartment and can serve their guests anything they want. It is their home and if they are comfortable with company with no masks coming to have coffee or pizza, they can. They are always fearful of doing the wrong thing. "If we get kicked out of here we won't have anywhere to go", is the statement I always get. I have reassured them that they don't have to worry. They have lived under order for so long they can't even think on their own.

I have a Second Mother who lives in LTC. She has been in lockdown up until about a month ago when she literally went to bed and decided she just didn't want to live any more. I received a txt from her daughter one day saying that she had gotten so bad that they were allowing Compassionate Care visits and that I was on the list. The first time I went in the curtains were pulled the lights were off and she was curled up under several blankets. I tried to get her to sit in the chair and visit with me but all she would say is, "There is no use", "There just isn't any use". She was stuck in this place and no one could come see her and it was awful and there was nothing to live for anymore. She would say to me, if I walk out in the hall they just tell me to get back to bed. I tried to reassure her that it would get better now. After a couple of weeks of visitation, she now enjoys having me do her nails and looking through cards and letters and going down to see the birds and walk me out. She knows I will be back and counts on it.

My mother in law died on December 18th after being in the LTC facility in Watford City for three months. Because she was end of life family was allowed in to visit 2 at a time. We were not allowed to talk to any of the other residents while in the facility and could not take her out of her room for a walk or anything. She always told us that she had never broke the law or committed any kind of crime in her life yet "Here I sit in Prison, she would say" She missed seeing her friends and grandchildren who could not come to see her. She had a stroke on December 14 and died on the 18th. She finally got out of her room.

I truly do believe that in all of these cases had Compassion, Care and Common Sense played a part, the outcomes would have been much better. I firmly believe that having just one family member allowed to go into the facility and touch them and give them encouragement, reinforcing that everything is all right and looking

into their eyes would bring life back to these forgotten Legends! Right now, there is no life left in a lot of these Residents eyes.

I have a close friend/sister who is dying as I write this with a brain tumor. We are fighting to keep her out of long term care because we would not be able to see her. When I am there she doesn't know a lot but she does know I love her and what my hug feels like! I will not let them take that away from her or me!

All of the Covid cases that came into the McKenzie County Healthcare Systems came from employees. I would have gladly taken weekly Covid testing to make sure I could be there for my parents. I feel each resident deserves a family member of their choice to come and be with them to fulfill emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.

I also believe that we cannot operate on a one size fits all Bill. There is no way we Operate a facility in ND the way one is run in New York. We also need to take this to the next step and get Federal Restrictions relaxed and on board with letting families have one lifeline.

Thank you for your time and for giving this the consideration it so deserves. These are the people who have formed us, our Community, our State and our Nation. They deserve better.

Barbara Johnson