

In Support of SB 303
March 27, 2021

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Senate District #27

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

As a geriatric and hospice nurse, I have seen first hand the effects of keeping facility doors closed from loved ones. I believe that keeping family members away from their loved ones is a form of cruel punishment.

While working in long term care, I have personally witnessed many patients decline due to depression instead of disease progression. The emotional toll from being locked in a facility without being able to socialize with family members and friends has led to a rapid decline from many patients. In fact, I have had patients beg me to be able to see their loved ones. One gentleman, a veteran mind you, said being in his “home” felt a lot like being a POW.

In a generation where we put so much emphasis on mental health, why wouldn't the mental health of our elders be the same? I've seen first hand how mental health issues exacerbates physical symptoms of disease. During a two week lockdown due to Covid, patients were not allowed to leave their rooms. During this two weeks, the rate of falls increased, pressure sores increased, and cognitive decline decreased. Patients were found crying in their room begging loved ones to get them.

As a hospice nurse, I have been in many long term care facilities. Many patients who were newly admitted to these facilities a year ago, are now on our services due to “rapid disease progression.” With that being said, since the opening of some facilities, I have seen patients make huge turn-arounds. They seem “lighter” in nature, they smile, they laugh, and they actually eat more. Their hearts are happy, therefore their body manifests with normal disease progression.

I thank you for taking the time to read this. This bill is more than just about opening facility doors. It's about giving the greatest generation that our world has seen, their lives back. It's allowing them to die in peace and dignity, and to live in the freedom that many of them fought for.

Respectfully,

Tisha Rein, BSN