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Washington County

Budget and Taxation Committee

*Subcommittees*

Education, Business and Administration

Pensions



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**Testimony in Support of SB47: Health Facilities – Nursing Homes and Assisted Living  
Programs – Essential Caregivers  
Senate Finance Committee  
February 4, 2021, 1:00 PM**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kelley & Members of the Finance Committee,

During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, long term care facilities and nursing homes were among the first facilities to shut down and limit public access in an effort to keep their residents and patients safe. These facilities house some of our state's most vulnerable population. When public access was limited, in-person visitation was halted. Again, in an effort to keep residents safe. Because Family Members were not able to see loved ones face-to-face, as you can imagine, this had a profoundly negative impact on residents. We have heard story after story of a patient's health declining significantly due to the lack of human interaction they were not (and are still not) receiving from their loved ones. I'm sure there are people on this Committee that have not been able to hug their mothers, fathers, or loved ones due to visitation being halted.

SB47 would allow one person, designated and appointed by the patient, to make an appt. to visit their loved one, not through a window, but inside the facility itself. The designated Essential Caregiver would still be required to complete the normal testing and safety protocols as directed by the facility staff and in accordance with local and state health guidelines. We know this virus is deadly. However, we must remember that the mental health of our elderly population is just as important as their physical health.

In consulting with a few organizations that were reviewing this bill, we have decided to narrow the focus and application of SB47 to ensure that it would only apply during a global public health emergency or pandemic. We have submitted an amendment that would address that deficiency in the bill and will share that with the Committee as soon as it is returned.

Thank you for your consideration and we respectfully request a favorable report from this Committee.

**Senator Paul D. Corderman**  
**District 2, Washington County**