

Good Afternoon,

I am writing in support of SB0047. We are the voices of the elderly who can no longer speak and act for themselves, and the elderly deserve more.

My Grandmother, who I call Meme, became a resident at an Assisted Living Facility in Maryland in late 2019 when her condition required a greater level of care than we were able to provide at home.

On March 14, 2020 the facility went into "lock down." Visitor access remains limited, sometimes fully restricted for weeks on end – with no end in sight. Family visits are essential for resident health and well-being, and at the very least, we should allow a single "Designated Essential Visitor" to be chosen by each resident.

My Grandmother's name is Rose Mary, and she is my namesake and my oldest daughter's namesake. And I could not be more proud to carry on the legacy of her name. Because she is an incredible woman, whose strength, grace, humor, and compassion will be our family's greatest legacy.

My Grandmother - Meme - was brought into this world **alone**. Her mother passed just after childbirth as a result of blood poisoning. Meme's father was devastated and felt as though Meme would be better cared for in an orphanage. And so she was cared for by nuns at St Ann's Infant Asylum (orphanage) in Hyattsville, Maryland, for the first several years of her life. This facility still exists today as a woman's and children's shelter.

When my father was only 9 years old, on February 14 - Valentines - his father passed of a massive heart attack in bed next to my Grandmother, leaving her to care for my father and aunt, **alone**.

More than a decade later she remarried to who I knew and loved as Grandad. Grandad passed from lung disease fourteen years ago, leaving Meme, **alone**.

Soon after Grandad passed we realized that Meme had been declining, her memory waning significantly. My father stepped in to care for her - without a single complaint - just as Meme cared for him. Once Meme reached the stage of requiring diaper changing and assistance bathing, our family made the difficult decision of putting her in an assisted living facility.

Over the last nearly 11 months our family has been able to visit with Meme only a handful of times. And each time we recognize the dramatic decline in her memory. And as my sister describes below, a dramatic decline in her physical health as well.

Meme can hardly see. Her memory, has betrayed her. But when I was able to bring my three young daughters - her three great-granddaughters - to see her more than a year ago - she smiled. She touched their hair, held their hands, laughed at their silly gestures. In that moment she was connected, she felt joy. Even back then, those

moments were fleeting, rare. But now, those moments don't exist at all. And that needs to change.

Although the offer of window visits and phone calls are a nice gesture, these options are not practical for Meme, and many others. Hearing and vision loss, coupled with a decreasing level of consciousness, necessitates **physical presence and touch** when we visit her. Whether it is my hand, or touching the soft curls in my daughters' hair, their tiny fingers, this loving touch brings Meme comfort, and joy. In this way, I am an Essential Caregiver for Meme, yet I am precluded from entry.

Meme has ventured through life alone at many times. **She does not deserve to venture into the remaining years of her life, alone.**

**We need clear legislation at the State level to put reasonable regulations in place.**

Thank you kindly,  
Jenna Rose Mills Palfrey