

My name is Roxann Montgomery.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in favor of SB0751.

Family councils are essential for the most vulnerable residents in assisted living facilities and for the education and mutual support of the family members who will need to advocate for their loved ones.

My mom spent nearly 29 months in long term care. She spent four months in an assisted living facility and then 25 months divided across two different skilled nursing facilities. There was no functioning family council at any of these facilities. All three facilities did have residents' councils.

Residents' councils can work for those residents who do not suffer cognitive issues. Unfortunately a large percentage of residents in long term care facilities do suffer with cognitive issues and many cannot remember or articulate their concerns and needs. This makes the establishment and maintenance of family councils critically important.

One of my unfortunate experiences across all three long term care facilities was management's consistent discouragement of communication among the families of residents and the discouragement of any family member communicating with any resident who was not their relative. Even though no family council existed, I got to know a couple of family members who spent a lot of time at my mom's facility. We exchanged contact information in the hallways and kept an eye out for each other's loved ones while we were in the facility.

For many residents and their families assisted living facilities can be their first exposure to long term care. Entry into assisted living is often preceded by a caregiving crisis in the home. It can be an extremely stressful time. Assisted living facilities should provide clear, concise, written information about family council, about how to access the public records of the family council, and about the function of an ombudsman and his/her contact information. I would respectfully suggest that this information be on its own sheet of paper for easy reference and not embedded in the middle of a multi-page contract.

I ask for your favorable vote on SB0751 and thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony,

Roxann Montgomery

