

January 21, 2025

Testimony for SB228 – Establishes the right of a resident of a residential care facility to the formation of a family council.

Submitted by: Glenda Kiesz, daughter of Violet Chalus who is currently residing in a Memory Care Facility in Springfield, Oregon.

I am writing this in support of SB228. My mother suffered a major stroke in February 2022 which affected her cognitive ability and speech and we needed to move her to a memory care facility. My brother lives in Eugene, Oregon and is able to visit her on a regular basis, however, I live in Sacramento, California and I am only able to visit her every few months. Because my mother's situation for care happened very quickly there was a lot of information we needed to know, including how care facilities work and how they are overseen within the State of Oregon. We fortunately became aware that my mom's facility had an active Family Council and this was very helpful to learn about different aspects of the facility, to be informed of care standards, resident rights and also know that our experiences were not unique and other families had similar observations, questions and even suggestions. Given my 425 mile distance from my mother's location, I would have not been able to gain all of this information and support without the existence of the family council.

A family council can also be an avenue by which the facilities management and staff can provide updates on changes, status on different aspects of their care and improving communication between families and facility staff. It is important for new families that have a loved one who has just moved into a care facility to be aware and informed if there is a family council, know this is a resource for them and can choose to participate. Having a loved one in a care facility is stressful and knowing about resources, resident rights and communicating with others in a similar situation can be helpful. Families should have the right to form a family council and make this information readily available. The ability to form a family council should not be left to individual facility management and subject to change based on evolving management policies or opinions.

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