

DATE: March 4, 2025

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services

RE: SB 228 – Right to form Independent Family Councils

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 228, which seeks to establish and protect the right of residents of Oregon's residential long-term care facilities to form and participate in independent family councils. As someone who is deeply committed to the welfare of older adults and individuals in long-term care, I believe this bill is essential to improving the quality of life for residents and ensuring that their voices, as well as the voices of their families, are heard.

Family councils provide an invaluable platform for residents and their loved ones to come together, advocate for residents' needs, and foster meaningful improvements in the care environment. This bill ensures that residents have the fundamental right to form these councils, which is crucial for empowering families to be active participants in the decision-making process related to the care and well-being of their loved ones. Family councils have proven to be a vital resource for communication between families and facility management, promoting transparency and accountability within long-term care settings.

SB 228 also prohibits residential care facilities from interfering with or retaliating against a resident or their family members for participating in a family council. This provision is especially important in protecting the autonomy of residents and ensuring they can freely express concerns or suggestions without fear of discrimination or retaliation. It is imperative that we support a care environment where families feel safe to advocate for their loved ones, knowing they will not face punitive actions as a result.

By passing this bill, Oregon will lead the way in prioritizing the rights and dignity of long-term care residents. I urge you to support SB 228 and help create a stronger, more transparent, and family-centered long-term care system in our state.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your ongoing commitment to improving the lives of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Diana Allen
Corvallis