

To Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Linthicum and Committee Members

I am writing to express my support for SB 228. As the granddaughter of a former resident at a residential care facility in Oregon, I believe that independent family councils are essential in ensuring that the voices of residents and their families are heard, respected, and actively involved in the decision-making processes that affect the care and well-being of our loved ones.

The need for independent family councils in residential care facilities is rooted in the growing demand for communication, and accountability in the care of our aging population. Residential care facilities play a crucial role in the lives of seniors, providing them with not only physical care but also emotional and social support. However, it is vital that families have a formal, structured way to engage with the facility to advocate for their loved ones' best interests.

Two family members at the residential care facility that my grandmother lived at started an independent family council, and it created an open line of communication between staff, management and families. Caring for an elderly loved one can be emotionally and physically draining. It can also be very isolating. The independent family council that was created at this facility in Oregon allowed family members of residents to share experiences, provide mutual support, and work together to improve the quality of care for all residents.

Independent family councils are a vital way to ensure that there is a platform for families to come together, voice their concerns, and collaborate with the management and staff of the facility. By doing so, independent family councils help ensure that the facility's policies and practices align with the highest standards of care. These councils are also essential because by providing a forum for families to discuss shared experiences, they can help to identify potential issues before they become problems, leading to quicker resolutions and better overall care for residents.

I strongly urge you to support this bill. It is a critical step in ensuring that our seniors receive the care and respect they deserve and that families are empowered to be active participants in their loved ones' care.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Ayla Bussel