

To the attention of:
Senator Sara Gelser-Blouin and the Senate Human Services Committee
Regarding: Support of Family Council Bill SB #228

Testimony for the Family Council bill — one person's perspective!
January 24, 2025

I wonder how can anyone deny the struggles of a family in transition with one of the most difficult decisions in life, to place a family member in a memory care facility? Regardless of circumstances, the uncertainties, the emotional ambiguity of the decision, intimidated by lack of enough knowledge associated with thoughts of, *never having done that before*, can often be quite unnerving, overwhelming and daunting! This was my frame of thoughts before making the decision for two close members of my family, my beloved sisters!

Four years into the process, I can look back and count my blessings for being introduced to the ongoing monthly meetings of the Family Council — at the very beginning stages of my younger sister's transition to Rawlin Memory Care at Riverbend in Springfield, Oregon.

The Family Council became an incredible support system to me on so many levels!

The commitment of the two caring individuals who initiated the Family Council, with full assistance from Ombudsman Debbie Boures, who was always present at each meeting to respond to questions or concerns, or making herself available to accompany family members when developing care plans for their loved ones, were invaluable services for me, and no doubt immensely helpful to many families in Rawlin!

Through the efforts and consistency of the Family Council, a host of professionals and experts were invited frequently to offer their knowledge in relevant fields, clarify options available to each family, and answer questions, which enhanced the educational aspects of these monthly meetings, considerably. In short, the unbiased attention and support of the Family Council had become an amazing 'safety net' for me, and for all families who chose to partake of this *labor of love service*, with our endless questions, struggles, or concerns — most especially for the new families who were experiencing similar mixed emotions, as I once did!

It is my sincere hope and conviction, that every memory care facility would allow and encourage initiating having a monthly Family Council, where questions, concerns, and suggestions for improvement could be openly discussed, consulted upon, and presented to the management.

Ultimately, where there is transparency, and sincere intention to grow and to evolve, maintaining a humble posture of learning, working together in cooperation, with a common goal, the outcome will be beneficial to everyone involved, the *residents, the families, and the management of the facility* — a truly win win condition for all involved. May the Family Council in Rawlin at Riverbend, becomes the first of many memory care facilities to embrace this invaluable service for the good of all residence and for the family's peace of mind!

Respectfully, and with warm regards,
Vida Ellins
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