

February 28, 2017

Position: In favor of Oregon Bill 2217

Chairman and Committee Members

My name is Mary Alfano, I am the daughter of Benjamin Alfano, now deceased. This is my story, but what I learned by talking to families and victims in Oregon, is that it can be anybody's story. You can have a confrontational family unit or a supportive loving family in place, this could be your story. My father was taken from his home on Christmas eve without our families' knowledge and dumped into a nursing home. He survived exactly nine weeks, two moves, a near escape, without a telephone and access to his mail. My father had become psychologically unstable because of his inability to adapt to so many changes, I asked that he would be seen by his doctors. The guardian replied by restricting his children and grandchildren from seeing him and my father sat isolated in a locked facility until his death. I have learned since that isolation is used often with guardians to secure their power or punish a family for being too involved. We know isolating the elder population causes depression and low mortality rates, but guardians use this practice often anyway had HB 2217 been in place of my father's isolation he would have been able to choose who and when he wanted to visit with. Had there been any so called "bad persons" to restrict, the guardian armed with proof would have been able to get a court order keeping them away. This rarely to never happens. HB 2217 also states that if there are any changes in the protected persons' health or death is near, supervised visitation would be put into place until normal court procedures take their place.

Quoting an advocate “No one should be denied the right to be at a loved one’s side at the end of life.”

My father was an Air Force flight instructor and later worked for the AFOSI. My father fought MS. My father recovered fully from being hit head on by a motor vehicle, minus 1 leg. I remember thinking this is the worst thing we will have to bring him through... It wasn't.

Thank for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.

Mary Alfano