

Senator Gelser,

I am writing in favor of Senate Bill 714.

My mother lived in an assisted living facility in Portland from 12/2017 to 9/2020 and has lived in a memory care facility since 2/2020. I can say without exaggeration that the care my mother received in both facilities has been poor at best, negligent at the worst. My mother suffers from Dementia with Lewey Bodies and is currently at the end of her life, on hospice.

I would attribute my mother's poor care to one thing: staffing issues. Lack of trained, qualified, and well paid long-term care facility caregivers is a chronic and industry-wide issue. Most of the caregivers I have watched care for my mom were caring, loving, and dedicated people who genuinely wanted to right by my mother. But because the facilities were unwilling to pay high enough wages to maintain adequate staffing, these care givers were over worked and unable to care for my mother and the other residents in the way they wanted.

I have heard from the OHCA that SB714 is not feasible because of the caregiver staffing shortage in the state and if facilities are mandated to increase staffing then they will increase resident fees and Medicaid charges. **THIS IS BLACKMAIL** to the entire state of Oregon. Why should the taxpayers and individuals pay **MORE** than the \$7000/month (average) being paid for adequate care in

these facilities when the profit margin for the owners of these facilities is so high?

Speaking of cost to the State of Oregon, I ask you to consider the hidden costs of under-staffing in Oregon's long term care facilities. For family members, low staffing means we are having to take up more care than we are able to give; having to do things the facility should be doing but can't because they don't have the staff. For me personally, this extra burden has led to increased medical expenses, lost time at work, and increased therapy bills - all of which are a cost to me and to Oregon taxpayers. Caregivers are being overworked and overstressed also leading to the same: increased medical expenses, lost time at work, and more as they try and cope with untenable working conditions. It should also be noted that my mom's facility is managed by one company out of Illinois and that management company is owned by another company with a post office box out of Florida. These companies are NOT benefiting Oregon and are in fact harming our state.

Some personal examples of what low-staffing looks like in regards to care for my mother include: finding her room dirty all the time, finding her wearing clothes that don't belong to her, laundry not being done, not being able to get her TV fixed or room repaired for weeks, mom not getting a shower for weeks, mom in dirty clothes, moldy dishes in the sink, rotten food in her refrigerator, 30+ minute wait times on a call-pendant for help, pills all over her floor, pant strings caught around her legs rubbing her skin raw, socks too tight for her ankles (photo attached),

foot care that was neglected (photo attached), no one answering the 'after-hours' phone, and lastly, not being prompted to eat or drink enough that she lost 40 pounds since September, just under 20% of her body weight in 6 months.

I firmly believe that if mom's facility had provided adequate staffing my mother would have lived longer than she will now. Regardless, the chronically low staffing in both my mom's facilities has diminished her quality of life in the last few years of her life. And this makes me sad and angry.

Mandating staffing levels in memory care facilities is a MUST for Oregon. The questions I hope Oregon Senators will ask themselves is do you care enough about people to vote yes on this bill? And do you care about the quality of life your loved one has at the end of their life? Because no matter how much money you spend on a long term care facility, without adequate staffing your loved one will suffer. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

*-Molly*

Molly McWaters