

1/18/18

Oral Testimony of Lisa Van Dusen, Occupational Therapist and PAC Certified Dementia Trainer speaking on behalf of my mother, who is unable to speak for herself in support for HB 2232. Included: (Video News Segment from Michael Schwanke, KWCH Fact-Finder 12)

October 1976; my elderly grandmother laid on the floor of her room in a stroke rehab center, unnoticed for two hours. Alone, unable to understand her paralysis, she fell to the floor trying to get out of bed. Brokenhearted by my grandmother's treatment, I became an occupational therapist to help other seniors at a time when they are most vulnerable: help them regain functional ability they may have lost through many types of injury or illness. I became an advocate for the elderly.

Fast forward 40 years to May 2016; it is now my mother who is elderly and frail, lost in the disease of Alzheimer's.

I became an advocate for my mother.

In a care facility, bruises were noticed on her face and hands. The police were called, and they believed the report from the caregiver that mom had bruised herself.

Mom could not report what happened to her; mom has Alzheimer's. My mother no longer knows her husband, her children, or her grandchildren. Her short-term memory is only a few seconds long. She is unable to walk, dress, or feed herself. Most of the time she is unable to express even her basic needs and wants. She is fearful of having her diapers changed, being dressed, and bathed. She has no concept of day, night, month, or year. She is lost: vulnerable because she is entirely dependent on others. Vulnerable, because she can put herself in situations to fall. Vulnerable, because she cannot report abuse that is happening to her.

I became an advocate for people living with Alzheimer's.

The care facility recommended we place a camera in my mother's room if we were concerned about her care. In September 2016, while reviewing video, I watched in horror as my mother was being abused by a caregiver.

I became an advocate for cameras.

In 1976, the technology was not available to help my grandmother. Today, in 2018, a camera helps to protect my mother. The technology is highly advanced, affordable and accessible. Cameras are used to protect our homes, our schools, our hospitals, our businesses. This simple tool in care facilities can protect our loved ones who are unable to protect themselves.

Through my experience, cameras serve the following:

1 - Help prevent abuse and mistreatment by reminding caregivers that a senior is being watched

and recorded by loved ones

2 - Catch abusers, like the abuser of my mom, that are brazen enough to abuse even when they know a camera is present

3 - Serve as a means to determine how a senior has fallen and how to prevent falls in the future

4 - Serve as training aids to staff on how to work most effectively with individual seniors

5 - Peace of mind for family members, as they cannot reasonably be with their loved ones around the clock

(Video News Segment from Michael Schwanke, KWCH Fact-Finder 12)

This video received over 50,000 views on Facebook alone. KWCH received dozens of calls from family members questioning the law or to share their story regarding their own family members in care facilities. This IS a critical topic of interest for the general public. With the aging population, there will be a tidal wave of baby boomers entering nursing homes.

One in nine people, aged 65 or older, has Alzheimer's. Look around this room; 1 in 9 of you will likely have Alzheimer's after age 65. More will be affected by family members with Alzheimer's.

By 2050, the number of people aged 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease may nearly triple.

Of all Medicare beneficiaries residing in a nursing homes, 64 percent have Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

In 2017, 51,000 Kansans suffered from Alzheimer's disease.

I have become an advocate for all Kansans living with Alzheimer's and their families that suffer with them. Will you join me in protecting them by voting for the HB2232?

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