

In support of SB303

03-26-2021

Ness City, KS, Senate District 33

**Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,**

My name is Gary Gantz. My father, R. F. "Bob" Gantz died in the Cedar Village nursing home in Ness City, KS on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020. He was 95. He did not die of covid. Thankfully, he never had it. He died because he simply had nothing left to live for.

Dad became seriously ill ten years prior. Stroke, cancer, pulmonary aneurism, perforated bowl, 11 surgeries in 9 months. I was beside him every step of the way. I had been since I could walk. We own D. E. Bondurant Grain Co. Founded in 1888 by my great grandfather Dan Bondurant, we are one of the oldest continually operated grain businesses under the same ownership in the nation. Dad served in World War 2 and upon his discharge went to KSU then came back to take over the family business with his mother in 1950. I was born in 1955 and aside from my own college years, my life has been spent in the business with dad.

After the last surgery he ended up in the Ness County Hospital to convalesce, and eventually to the nursing home. He had gone from 180 lbs. down to 112, but slowly over time he came back. For the next 8 and a half years I would pick him up 5 days a week and take him to the office in the morning, we would eat lunch together and I would take him back in the afternoon. Cedar Village had become his home and he was very happy there.

On a Friday in mid-March, 2020 family and friends gathered at the nursing home for a ceremony. Dad and another veteran, Ralph Stenzel, both received their 75-year American Legion pin. The rumor was circulating that the next Monday the nursing home would be closed in for an undetermined amount of time. The next morning, I went to see him and couldn't get in.

A few weeks had gone by when I got a call from dad's physician, Dr. Imseis. The staff had dropped dad getting him to the bathroom. He needed to go into the hospital and refused. Dr. Imseis made arrangements for me to go into the nursing home and help move dad to the hospital. He was in the hospital for about 10 days. Of course, we couldn't go in and see him. Fortunately, he had a window that was accessible and if we called the nurses, they would open it and let us talk to him. One evening when I was there his room door was open and I could see across the hall. There was a big commotion and the cops had to come and remove some crazy person that had destroyed their room across from dad. And this makes sense? I can't see my dad but they can put anyone off the street in the next room? REALLY?

In a few more days dad was able to go back to his room but he was weak. He missed his first wheat harvest in 75 years. A couple of weeks went by and the nurses called to tell me they had gotten dad to get back in his wheel chair. I could meet him in the courtyard! I immediately went to the hospital, was able to go to the courtyard and they brought dad. We visited a bit and he said "Well, where are we going?" I said "Dad they won't let me take you out" "Then you might as well take me back to my room"

It was downhill after that. Doctor Imseis put him on end of life and one family member at a time could see him. I pleaded with him "Dad if you don't eat and drink a little you'll die!" He looked me right in the eye and said "Then I'll die".

There is no happy ending here. Despite all their efforts, covid swept through Cedar Village and killed many. To not allow family members to see their loved ones, be in the same room with them, talk with them, comfort them is wrong. These people survived the depression, the dust bowl, world war 2 and Korea. Think of what they have seen. Respect what they've done! They are the last living direct link to the people that settled this country. They deserve more!

Thank you for your time,

Gary R. Gantz  
President, D. E. Bondurant Grain Co. Inc.  
Ness City, Ks.