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Thank you for the opportunity to support The Assisted Living Resident Empowerment Act, [SB484/HB 5169](#) in Assisted Living residences.

I am witness to the power of Resident and Family Councils in nursing homes and I firmly believe they should exist in Assisted Living residences, too. Families and Residents working with administrators to advocate for themselves helps everyone, including Ombudsmen, who can concentrate on those residents not able to advocate ~ everyone benefits.

It is only fair that Assisted Living residents have the same right to be informed of a rent or rate increase in a timely manner – not 30 days. This current policy is not advocating for the end user, a senior, a member of our most vulnerable population. There should be clarity in the language and disclosures for these residents.

We formed our Family Council by engaging families we met on our Nursing Home's weekly informational Zooms in May 2020, which helped lessen the effects of the lockdown and isolation ~ we became a support group and learned how to effectively advocate for our loved ones by engaging our Ombudswoman and familiarizing ourselves with legislation, HIPAA, and Nursing Home regulations. We helped educate Montrose administration on Hospice Care service advances in the 20 years since they interviewed Hospice Care organizations and advocated for residents' rights for better nutrition and healthier food choices. And we just convinced the administration to invest in Scandent, a loss prevention software used in other NYS Veteran Homes.

I used the skills in forming and growing our Family Council to work with families and Ombudsmen throughout the country to form, maintain, and grow Family Councils with a grant through the **Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC)**. I worked with Family Councils and Ombudsmen in AL, CA, DE, IA, KY, MD, MA, NC, NY, TX, and VA over 2 and a half years to share how to best communicate with their administrators and advocate for their loved ones.

I learned about the power and importance of advocacy from co-founding and leading our Family Council in May 2020. When families work together with residents and Ombudsmen to approach and work with long term care administrators and homes, they can effect change for residents and improve their quality of life: this three-pronged approach encourages teamwork and leads to success. I learned about the importance of working with your Ombudsman and the diplomacy necessary to practice for administrators and staff to listen to you and to treat you as an equal caregiver for your loved one.

I respectfully urge you to support H5169 so that all residents in assisted living and their care partners can tap into the power of family and resident councils, joining together to more effectively advocate for their loved ones.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jenine Ferrari