

Testimony:

Thank you, Madam Chair and Members of the Committee, for taking the time to hear this testimony. My name is Bryce Webster I am the Legislative Director for Senator Jim Stamas. Senator Stamas appreciates the opportunity for a hearing on Senate Bill 450. Senator Stamas would also like to apologize that he could not be here today, but he was committed to a previous engagement.

Senate Bill 450 would amend the public health code with respect to orders issued by state and local Department of Health and Human Services officers to issue emergency public health orders to control an epidemic. Over the past two and a half years, we've had situations across the state play out with family members in hospitals, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers having non-COVID, and COVID-related health procedures done with limited in-person access for their family members or their representatives. Senator Stamas refers to them as loved individuals needing dedicated attention. Senator Stamas would also like to make sure that we thank all those who provide health services and work in these facilities day in and day out.

During the pandemic, parents, grandparents, and relatives, some of whom were struggling with dementia, confusion, and fear, were not allowed to have anyone with them while making these serious decisions. Senator Stamas personally experienced this situation.

This legislation would allow for an individual with a cognitive impairment, to designate a Personal Medical Representative. A Personal Medical Representative would be allowed in a health care facility with that individual while they are making healthcare-related decisions if an emergency medical order has lasted longer than 30 days. The Department of Health and Human Services can establish guidelines and procedures for visitations as well as limit the number of patient representatives at one time. Hospitals and other health care facilities can also develop and implement rules and procedures surrounding visitation policies and any requirements they may have implemented.

We all experienced things over the last two and a half years that were never anticipated before. This legislation would provide peace of mind for families and loved ones, knowing they have this support system when and if it is needed.

For a year and a half, we have worked with multiple different stakeholders. Such as the Health Care Association of Michigan, the Michigan Hospital Association, Ascension Health, Trinity Health, McLaren, the Executive Office of the Governor, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Senator Hertel on this legislation, some of whom you'll hear from and some have put in cards.

With the lessons we've learned from the Covid pandemic, Senate Bill 450 is a narrowly tailored solution to a problem many of us have experienced.

Thank you for taking the time today. If any committee members have questions, Danielle and I would be happy to answer them the best we can. Senator Stamas asks for your support on Senate Bill 450.