

**Statement in Support of SB 134:
“The Eve Nelson and Virginia Baker Camera Act of 2025”**

Dear Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

My name is Bob Bussel, and I live in Eugene. I write in support of SB 134, a bill that establishes the right of a resident in a long-term care facility, residential care facility, or an adult foster home to use an electronic monitoring device in the resident's room or private living unit. The bill is popularly known as “The Eve Nelson and Virginia Baker Camera Act of 2025.”

Jewel Nelson and Judith Smith have been the moving forces behind this legislation. Their mothers, Eve Nelson and Virginia Baker, both suffered from dementia and resided at The Rawlin, a memory care facility in Springfield, until their deaths in 2024. Eve Nelson was my mother-in-law, and I supported my wife Jewel during the ten years when she was managing her mother's care, including her four years at The Rawlin. Through her experience, I learned first-hand about the value of the camera that she had installed in her mother's room.

As you are aware, memory care facilities in our state face many systemic challenges. Low pay and the stress of the job have created high turnover among caregivers and made it difficult to maintain adequate levels of staffing. Given the multiple needs of people with dementia, these circumstances diminish the ability of memory care facilities to provide quality care for residents. With the onset of the COVID-19 virus, these problems became even more pronounced.

Jewel installed a camera in her mother's room during COVID so she could remain connected while families were barred from entering the facility. As things evolved, she used the camera to work collaboratively with caregivers. Jewel shared important information with caregivers and offered them advice on how to establish a rapport with her mom. On occasions when her mother fell or was out of sorts, which happened more frequently as her illness progressed, Jewel was able to assess the situation quickly based on the camera footage and follow up with caregivers. The camera also proved to be an indispensable tool when Jewel was out of town, providing assurance that she could keep tabs on her mother and continue to support caregivers with whom she had established close relationships.

Attesting to the importance and growing popularity of cameras, nineteen states have now approved their use, with over half of these bills becoming laws in the past five years. In addition to Oregon, legislatures in Arizona, Florida, and Pennsylvania are currently considering camera bills during their current sessions.

Observations made during the debate on Rhode Island's camera bill, which became law earlier this year, affirm the important role that cameras can play for residents and families. According to Representative Jason Knight, “This [legislation] is about giving families and

patients a sense of security. This law takes advantage of the technology that is available today to allow monitoring for a good purpose. The point of this monitoring isn't adversarial, but rather to assist the collaborative care relationship between the resident, their family and the nursing home for the safety, health and benefit of all residents."

Kathleen Gerard, director of Advocates for Better Care in Rhode Island, added: "A camera can provide peace of mind, ensure quality care and exonerate staff who are falsely accused. We just want residents and their legal representatives to have the right to make this choice for themselves."

Alex Moore, the political director for SEIU in Rhode Island, told his state's legislature that the camera bill would protect workers from "unfounded allegation or misunderstandings." He also declared that cameras would "enhance the trust and collaboration between caregivers, residents, and their families."

Currently, facilities are not required to allow the use of cameras. SB 134 would ensure that families have the right to install a camera if they choose. The bill is also sensitive to privacy concerns and worker protections, and it contains specific provisions that address these issues.

Admittedly, the camera will not solve the systemic problems of memory care facilities. However, they will provide families with a valuable tool that can support the well-being of their loved ones and enhance their ability to ensure that they receive quality care.

The ability to install a camera is an idea whose time has come. I strongly urge you to support memory care residents and their families by approving SB 134.