

Statement to Legislature in regards to Bill 218

By Gary Clarke

To the legislature:

Please reconsider the passing of Bill 218. Passing this Bill would be an injustice to many and personally an insult and putting salt on the wounds to the families of senior Canadians who have lost their lives to nursing home covid-19. It is a shameful, disrespectful and despicable act to even consider to table such legislation.

On April 15, 2020 and April 28, 2020 I lost my beloved parents, Esme Clarke and Vincent Clarke to covid-19. They acquired this fatal virus as residents of the Altamont Care Community LTC run by Sienna Living. The outbreak at Altamont eventually led to 53 nursing home resident deaths including my parents.

All we were met with during the pandemic was miscommunication, deceit and negligence from Altamont. The same individuals and management personnel at Altamont who were supposed to take care of my parents and of whom were paid to take care of them, protect their lives and provide the necessities of life, in turn endangered and carelessly infected my parents with covid-19 which killed them. Improper PPE handling, lack of social distancing measures, on and on. My parents did not get covid-19 from any visitor or family member. Altamont and surely other nursing homes badly mismanaged this situation. These are not mistakes where you can shrug your shoulders and move on. These are literally life and death management decisions that were miserably bungled by incompetent management such as those at Altamont. These are lives lost, families devastated. Why would anyone who lost someone in this manner be supportive of a Bill like this?

I am appalled at any action and/or legislation that would assist to skirt responsibility to those who caused my parents death. I feel that this is what Bill 218 will do. This Bill will make any burden of proof more difficult in the courts. Why make me and my family suffer like this?

My parents were exemplary and loyal Canadians. They immigrated to Canada from Jamaica in the mid to late 1960's with hopes of a better life. They did everything right and they did it for Canada. They paid their taxes, they raised their children, worked hard and exercised their democratic rights to vote.

My parents could not take care of themselves, each other and we as their children and in-laws exhausted all of our abilities to fully care for their needs. This is why as a family we decided that entering the long term care system was the best move for them at the time in February 2019.

My parents deaths, the manner of which they died and the close time frame (13 days apart from each other) has caused my family and myself unspeakable mental agony. Covid 19 cruelly took my parents lives in suffering and they died alone without their family by their side. We are a

close family with me being especially close to my parents and the thought of them suffering haunts me and probably will for the rest of my life. My parents did nothing to deserve this awful fate. My parents did nothing as in culpability to get covid-19.

We already have to live with the harsh reality for the rest of our lives, nothing is going to bring my parents back. Nothing will ease our pain. My parents birthdays have passed, mother's day, father's day, my wedding anniversary, Thanksgiving day and soon is their wedding anniversary and Christmas on the horizon. These time periods are all precious moments I spend each year with my parents. This has all been shattered and torn to bits because of negligent behaviour at Altamont.

My parents deserve better, their lives mattered. My parents deserve justice. It is the responsibility of the government to take care of our seniors, one of the most vulnerable sectors of our population. Our seniors did so much for this country and they should be honored. Instead many, like my parents were met with disgrace and dishonor due to an inadequate response by negligent nursing homes. Bill 218 gives these nursing homes more power and victimizes grieving families like mine. I miss my parents very much and I love them dearly.

Please rethink the passing of Bill 218.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

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