Print Media: Peter Falk's Law, Right of Association



New York: Peter Falk's Law, 2016



New York News: Peter Falk's Law



COMING TO THE AID OF LT. COLUMBO

"My office received an email last June 2014 from Catherine Falk, the daughter of the late Peter Falk, who starred in the TV series "Columbo" from 1971-2003. During that time, Peter Falk received four Emmys for his portrayal of the bumbling, trench-coat wearing, but cagey and clever Lt. Columbo of the Los Angeles Police Department. This was one of my favorite TV shows, and clearly I was not alone given the fan-base of Peter Falk and this character.

Peter Falk's daughter Catherine, however, was calling my office for help in a real-life situation that was most painful for her. Catherine Falk has been on a journey that started in 2009 when she went to trial fighting in probate court for visitation rights under the conservatorship umbrella held by her dad's second spouse, who was isolating not only Catherine, but also her sister Jackie, family members, his first wife Alyce and his friends from access to her father. Catherine Falk maintained that, "Once again greed and money were at the bottom of the problem for the isolation of an elderly parent."

Recently, a similar case involving the children of Casey Kasem was in the news involving the current spouse denying children and finally access to their father.

In contacting me, Catherine Falk wanted help in getting legislation passed in New York State that would amend the law in relation to guardianship duties and visitation claims. Catherine noted that her father, Peter Falk, was born and raised in New York. Her parents met at and graduated from Syracuse University, as she did. Catherine knew that I was also a life-long New Yorker and a graduate of Syracuse University, so she took a "leap-of-faith" that I would help her and other families struggling through these heart-wrenching situations. And so I did.

I have sponsored Assembly bill A.3461, which will protect the rights of adult children of a parent currently under a conservatorship. Current law does not provide a proper avenue for adult children to petition the courts in New York for reasonable visitation rights. The proposed bill creates a legal process by which the adult children can petition the court if they are unreasonably being denied visitation or improperly isolated by the conservator. It also requires the guardian to inform relatives if the parent is admitted to the hospital, notify them if they have died, and in the case of death notify them of any funeral and/or burial arrangement. Senator John DeFrancisco is sponsoring the companion legislation (S.3154) in the Senate.

Since 2009, Catherine Falk has fought for a California visitation rights bill and she expects it to become law soon. "Peter Falk bills" are also being considered in the states of New Jersey, Florida and the District of Columbia. A visitation bill was enacted in the state of Iowa in April 2015.

Catherine Falk is committed to her goal of passing similar legislation throughout the U.S. She is using her own money for any expenses incurred during her campaign and no donations are being asked for or accepted. Catherine does not believe anyone pursuing similar legislation should ever make money from this kind of work. Falk said, "It seems that people get side-tracked and try to get fame and fortune from getting legislation like this passed. I seek neither; I truly want to see no one else lose precious time with their parent."

Catherine is grateful for the support I have given her in spear-heading this effort in New York State. She states, "This is the 4th Anniversary of Peter Falk's death and it would be great to get this bill passed in New York this year." Falk continues, "My dad always told me 'go get them kid.' He always taught me to stay true to myself and stay true to who I am, and to fight for what I know is right. This truly was how he lived his life on and off the screen."

I am hopeful that the "Peter Falk Bill" will be passed and signed into law. The new legislation will be named in honor of the late Peter Falk, renowned actor, New York native and Syracuse University Alumnus. This final chapter of "Columbo" deserves a happy ending."

News Release: New York Sponsorship

Assemblyman Magnarelli, 2016



Thank you

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

August 16, 2016

Dear Ms. Falk:

Please find enclosed an official Pen Certificate for Assembly bill A.3461-C, "Peter Falk's Law". The bill was signed into law by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on July 21, 2016. As prime-sponsor of the legislation in the Assembly, I want to thank you for your help and advocacy on getting this bill passed.

I feel strongly that this new law will help to prevent situations like the one you went through with your father. It will require New York Courts to consider the rights of adult children when issuing guardianship orders. This will hopefully deal with issues of notice and visitation at the outset, preventing future conflict between children and the appointed guardian.

Again, I want to thank you for sharing your story with me. As a fellow alumnus of Syracuse University, I greatly admired your father's career, and I admire your nationwide advocacy for new laws to prevent guardian abuse. I wish you the best of luck in your continued efforts. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Very truly yours,

William B. Magnarelli
Member, NYS Assembly
129th District

WBM/cmu

Enclosure

New York Appreciation Letter



Built to Lead

GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

GOVERNOR CUOMO SIGNS "PETER FALK'S LAW" LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING END OF LIFE NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

New York Press Release, 2016



Utah: Sponsor, Senator Todd Weiler, 2016



Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed "Peter Falk's Law," legislation that requires guidelines for end of life notices and visitation rights regarding incapacitated individuals subject of legal guardianship proceedings.

The bill (A.3461-C/S.5154-C), requires the court order appointing a guardian to oversee the care of an incapacitated person to identify all individuals who are entitled to notice of a person's death, funeral and burial arrangements.

"Losing a loved one is always hard, but not being given the chance to say goodbye is perhaps even harder," **Governor Cuomo said.** "This measure will help ensure an individual's friends and family will have an opportunity to express their love and pay their respects at this critical and trying time."

In some circumstances under the current law, legally-appointed guardians have failed to notify family members or close friends of the individual when they become sick, are admitted to the hospital, or pass away. By requiring the identification and notification of other family and friends, this law will help ensure legal guardians will no longer be able to improperly isolate an incapacitated person at the end of their lives.

Senator John A. DeFrancisco said, "I am very pleased that Governor Cuomo has signed my bill to become Peter Falk's law. For every wrong, there should be a remedy. This law will help to protect the sick and dying from isolation from their family, while ensuring that next of kin are informed of the person's condition and ultimately notified of the person's death, funeral and burial arrangements."

Assemblyman William B. Magnarelli said, "I want to thank the Governor for signing this important bill into law. The bill is named in honor of the legendary actor, Peter Falk. Peter Falk was a native of New York and a graduate of Syracuse University. This law will protect the rights of adult children and relatives when a person is placed under the care of a guardian. It will protect their right to be notified of the person's passing and if they have been admitted to the hospital. It also allows the appointing court to identify those entitled to visitation in the guardianship order. The issue was brought to my attention by Catherine Falk, Peter's daughter. When her father became ill, she was prevented from visiting him and was not notified of major changes in his condition. This inspired her to become an advocate for other families facing the improper isolation of a relative by a guardian. I want to thank Catherine for her tireless advocacy in getting this important bill passed."

"Peter Falk's Law" was sparked by the end-of-life treatment of the late actor and "Columbo" star Peter Falk. Mr. Falk's daughter had alleged the actor's second wife obtained conservatorship of him and blocked all contact with other family members at the end of his life.

New York Press Release, 2016



I invited Catherine Falk to speak for my bill. She is the daughter of Peter Falk, famous for starring in the TV series, Columbo. Catherine related the experience that she had in trying to visit her father who was dealing with medical issues including Alzheimer's. Her step-mother blocked here access to visit him, and Catherine was forced to spend over $100,000 on attorney's fees in fighting for the right to visit her father. Catherine pointed out that she did not want to obtain a conservatorship or power over Mr. Falk's assets, she just wanted to have the freedom to visit her father. She said, "Our bill is designed to stop bad guardians from isolating their wards with no accountability for their actions." She went on to say that, "It protects the growing number of people who are currently falling through the cracks and they have absolutely nowhere to go for help. Our bill is not designed to make it harder for good guardians to do their job. Our bill helps to impede those who are wrongly isolating their wards with no accountability." She explained that the bill requires the guardian to provide the burden of proof to the judge in order to override an incapacitated person's wishes.

Utah News: Senator Todd Weiler, 2016 Right of Association, SB 111 (Peter Falk Bill)



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
16TH DISTRICT

Dancer's "Peter Falk (Columbo) Bill" Protects the Rights of Family Members when a Loved One is Suffering

TRENTON , N.J. – Legislation introduced by Assemblyman Ron Dancer strengthens the rights of family members of elderly or severely ill individuals who are the subject of an order of guardianship. The bill, A-4045, establishes requirements for information sharing and physical access to the patient.

"It is unfortunate, when a loved one is sick or dying, that the complexity of family relationships makes this legislation necessary," said Dancer, R-Ocean, Burlington , Monmouth and Middlesex.

Dancer noted that his bill is similar to laws recently enacted in Texas and Iowa , and legislation introduced in New York and California .

"A third party can literally swoop in and isolate a loved one. Grown children have been prevented from visiting a parent. Family members are sometimes unable to get simple information about the condition of a loved one, or even the cause of death," said Dancer.

The measure will be titled the "Peter Falk (Columbo) Act," named for the television actor, who starred in the television series "Columbo". Falk's ex-wife and daughter were locked in a legal battle for years and prevented from any contact with Falk, who suffered from dementia.

"I am so honored and excited that Assemblyman, Ronald Dancer has sponsored the Peter Falk Bill in honor of my father best known for his role as Lt. Columbo. The adult visitation rights bill for the state of New Jersey is a much needed piece of legislation that protects, preserves and respects the rights to visitation when an aging parent, adult disabled person or a ward of the state is being denied access to his/her family, friends, advocates, or clergy. Dreams do come true and I know my father is resting down at me, telling me as he always did, "way to go kid", his always believed in my relentless passion and determination while chasing my dreams", said Catherine E. Falk.

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New Jersey Press Release: Assemblyman Dancer



Tennessee
Senate Republican Caucus

Capitol Hill Week

Legislation works to prevent conservators from isolating their ward from visitation with family members

The Senate Judiciary Committee has approved a bill, sponsored by Senator Rusty Crowe (R-Johnson City), to restrict the ability of a conservator to isolate their ward from visitation by family members or loved ones without just cause. A conservator is a legally appointed guardian of a disabled person. Under current law, a conservator can restrict visitation and communication with the ward in Tennessee without going to court, even when it involves communication or visits by a family member. Crowe said that, due to the growing number of divorces, this has become a problem when there is conflict between children of an incapacitated adult whose spouse has been named the conservator.

"We are seeing a growing number of cases of Alzheimer's disease, dementia and other disabilities which call for a conservator to be appointed," said Sen. Crowe, who is Chairman of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee. "This gets very difficult when there are strained family relationships between the conservator and the ward's family members and it involves the decision that no communication should occur."

"Presently, the conservator has power over the ward to control many things, including who can visit them, even when they are in a long term care facility," he added. "What we are trying to accomplish with this legislation is to balance the rights of the ward to continue strong family relationships after they are incapacitated, while providing ample protection through the court when it is not in their best interest and the conservator objects."

Catherine Falk, daughter of actor Peter Falk, most notably of the *Columbo* television series, and Marcia Southwick with "Boomers Against Elder Abuse" testified during the committee meeting. Falk talked about her own personal suffering as she was denied contact with her ailing father during his last days, saying she was left with virtually no recourse because his second wife obtained conservatorship of him. Falk told committee members that wards and their families suffer horribly by cruel acts of isolation from loved ones, which can constitute illegal retaliation under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Civil Rights Act of 1964. Falk and Southwick are working with legislatures across the U.S. in promoting the bill nationwide.

Senate Bill 2091 provides the ward has a right to visit, communicate or interact with family and loved ones and that a conservator shall not restrict it unless specifically authorized by a court order. It also provides a process by which the conservator can petition the court to place

Tennessee: Campbell~Falk Bill, 2016



Campbell Falk BILL now LAW

The brand new Law protects a person who have become wards of the State or who have conservators controlling their finances, day to day living and visitation. These poor wards are not even allowed to get mail, a very basic right that is given even to death row inmates.

This new law helps to prevent abuse of the system and those conservators and protects the Wards. Now Travis and Debby will have liberal visitation to their father and so will all the other people that this BILL turned LAW affects in Tennessee.

Congratulations Travis Campbell, Debby Campbell and most especially Catherine Falk, the daughter of Peter Falk who is getting this Bill or Bills similar to it passed state by state. She has worked so long and hard at this so that what happened to her and her father will never happen to another human being again.

Click here to read the BILL at the Catherine Falk Organization website.

Tennessee: Campbell~Falk Bill, 2016



Actor Peter Falk's Daughter Pushing For Change In Legal Guardianship Law

January 27, 2016 6:26 PM

Filed Under: Catherine Falk, Colorado Bar Association, Columbo, Laura Woods, Legal Guardianship, Peter Falk, Peter Falk Bill

Bill Concerning Legal Guardians

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DENVER (CBS4) – Some Colorado lawmakers want to strip some the decision making power from legal guardians, and they're getting help from the daughter of a famous actor.

The bill is named after Peter Falk, the actor who played Columbo on TV. What it does seems basic — it simply allows families to see their loved ones when they become incapacitated. It's about the power of guardians and the rights of some of the most vulnerable Coloradans.

Peter Falk was known to TV viewers as the disheveled, endearing detective Columbo. Catherine Falk knew him as "Dad."

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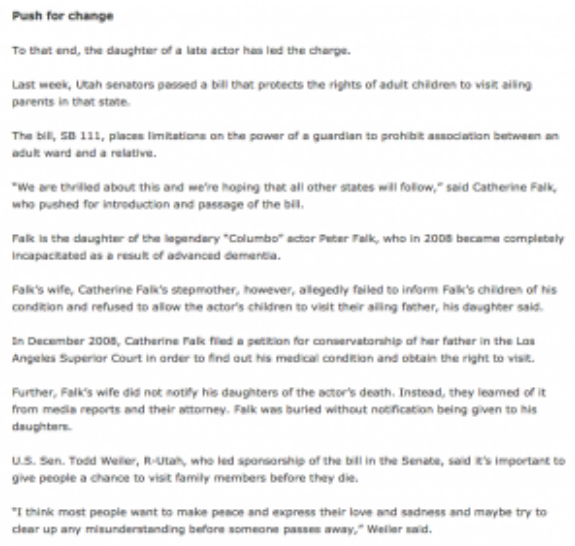
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Colorado Sponsorship: Senator Laura Woods



Push for change

To that end, the daughter of a late actor has led the charge.

Last week, Utah senators passed a bill that protects the rights of adult children to visit ailing parents in that state.

The bill, SB 111, places limitations on the power of a guardian to prohibit association between an adult ward and a relative.

"We are thrilled about this and we're hoping that all other states will follow," said Catherine Falk, who pushed for introduction and passage of the bill.

Falk is the daughter of the legendary "Columbo" actor Peter Falk, who in 2008 became completely incapacitated as a result of advanced dementia.

Falk's wife, Catherine Falk's stepmother, however, allegedly failed to inform Falk's children of his condition and refused to allow the actor's children to visit their ailing father, his daughter said.

In December 2008, Catherine Falk filed a petition for conservatorship of her father in the Los Angeles Superior Court in order to find out his medical condition and obtain the right to visit.

Further, Falk's wife did not notify his daughters of the actor's death. Instead, they learned of it from media reports and their attorney. Falk was buried without notification being given to his daughters.

U.S. Sen. Todd Weiler, R-Utah, who led sponsorship of the bill in the Senate, said it's important to give people a chance to visit family members before they die.

"I think most people want to make peace and express their love and sadness and maybe try to clear up any misunderstanding before someone passes away," Weiler said.

Utah News: Sponsorship Senator Todd Weiler



Utah Sponsorship: Senator Todd Weiler 2016



Utah News: Sponsorship, Senator Todd Weiler



State Senate
State of Tennessee

Capitol Hill Week

Legislation works to prevent conservators from isolating their ward from visitation with family members

The Senate Judiciary Committee has approved a bill to restrict the ability of a conservator to isolate their ward from visitation by family members or loved ones without just cause. A conservator is a legally appointed guardian of a disabled person. Under current law, a conservator can restrict visitation and communication with the ward in Tennessee without going to court, even when it involves communication or visits by a family member. Due to the growing number of divorces, this has become a problem when there is conflict between children of an incapacitated adult whose spouse has been named the conservator.

Catherine Falk, daughter of actor Peter Falk, most notably of the *Columbo* television series, and Marcia Southwick with "Boomers Against Elder Abuse" testified during the committee meeting. Falk talked about her own personal suffering as she was denied contact with her ailing father during his last days, saying she was left with virtually no recourse because his second wife obtained conservatorship of him. Falk told committee members that wards and their families suffer horribly by cruel acts of isolation from loved ones, which can constitute illegal retaliation under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Civil Rights Act of 1964. Falk and Southwick are working with legislatures across the U.S. in promoting the bill nationwide.

Senate Bill 2091 provides the ward has a right to visit, communicate or interact with family and loved ones and that a conservator shall not restrict it unless specifically authorized by a court order. It also provides a process by which the conservator can petition the court to place restrictions upon communication or interaction by showing good cause. Some of the factors the court can consider are previous protective orders, whether the ward expresses the wish to visit and past preferences.

The legislation allows interested persons, including the ward, to petition the court if they reasonably believe a court order has been violated. If the order is knowingly violated, the proposal gives the court the authority to modify the conservator's duties or to discharge or displace them. Finally, the bill sets out the process for courts to hear motions and stipulates that hearings will be scheduled no later than 60 days after being filed. If the ward's health is in significant decline, that would require a 10-day notice.

Tennessee Capitol News: Campbell~Falk Bill, 2016



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Campbell Falk BILL now LAW

Glen Campbell

Campbell Falk Bill Now Law

Campbell Falk Bill Now Law will be effective on Monday, May 16, 2016 when the Governor of Tennessee Bill Haslam makes it official by applying his John Hancock to the Bill. Glen Campbell who has been suffering with Alzheimer's Disease will now have some protection.

Tennessee News: Campbell~Falk Bill

2016



The bill is named after Peter Falk, the actor who played Columbo on TV. What it does seems basic — it simply allows families to see their loved ones when they become incapacitated. It's about the power of guardians and the rights of some of the most vulnerable Coloradans.

Peter Falk was known to TV viewers as the dishevele, endearing detective Columbo. Catherine Falk knew him as "Dad."

Catherine and Peter Falk (credit: Catherine Falk)

"He was exactly the same on screen as off screen," Catherine Falk said. "He was just this tender, really funny, goofy person."

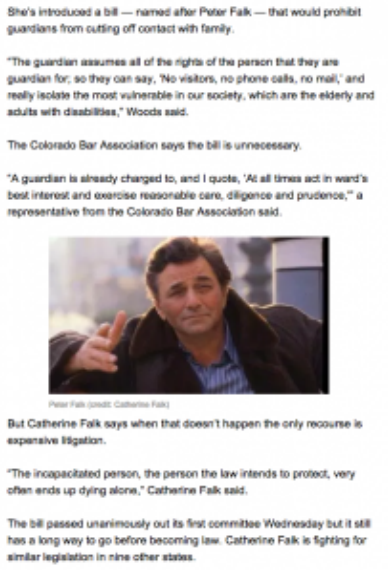
But Peter Falk's life would take a tragic turn when he developed Alzheimer's disease. His second wife isolated him, forcing his daughter to go to probate court just to see her father before he died.

"It cost me close to $100,000 in my money, not my dad's money, my money to get in just before he passed away; that's wrong," Catherine Falk said.

Sen. Laura Woods, R-Jefferson County, agrees.

"The same program designed to protect these vulnerable citizens also exposes them to exploitation," Woods said.

Colorado News: Sponsorship, Senator Laura Woods. 2016



She's introduced a bill — named after Peter Falk — that would prohibit guardians from cutting off contact with family.

"The guardian assumes all of the rights of the person that they are guardian for; so they can say, 'No visitors, no phone calls, no mail,' and really isolate the most vulnerable in our society, which are the elderly and adults with disabilities," Woods said.

The Colorado Bar Association says the bill is unnecessary.

"A guardian is already charged to, and I quote, 'At all times act in ward's best interest and exercise reasonable care, diligence and prudence,'" a representative from the Colorado Bar Association said.

Peter Falk (credit: Catherine Falk)

But Catherine Falk says when that doesn't happen the only recourse is expensive litigation.

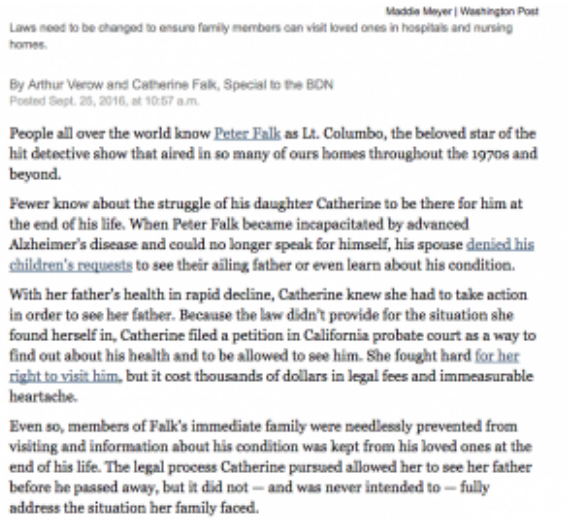
"The incapacitated person, the person the law intends to protect, very often ends up dying alone," Catherine Falk said.

The bill passed unanimously out its first committee Wednesday but it still has a long way to go before becoming law. Catherine Falk is fighting for similar legislation in nine other states.

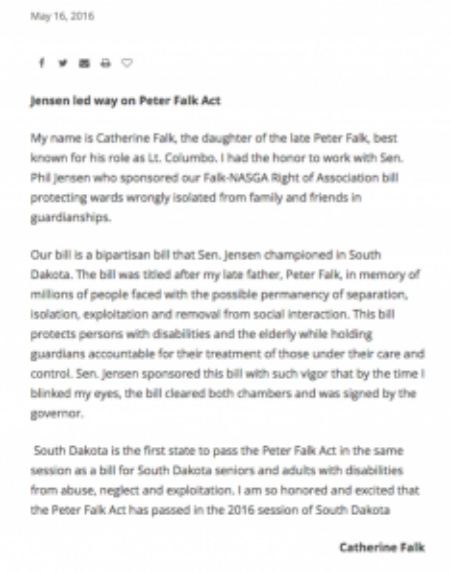
Colorado News: Sponsorship, Senator Laura Woods. 2016



Colorado News: Sponsorship, Senator Laura Woods. 2016



Maine News: Sponsorship, 2016



May 16, 2016

Jensen led way on Peter Falk Act

My name is Catherine Falk, the daughter of the late Peter Falk, best known for his role as Lt. Columbo. I had the honor to work with Sen. Phil Jensen who sponsored our Falk-NASGA Right of Association bill protecting wards wrongly isolated from family and friends in guardianships.

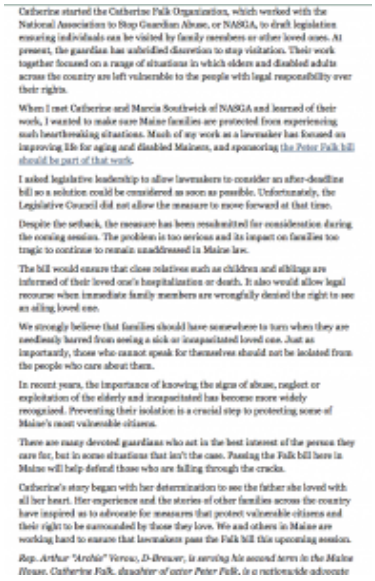
Our bill is a bipartisan bill that Sen. Jensen championed in South Dakota. The bill was titled after my late father, Peter Falk, in memory of millions of people faced with the possible permanency of separation, isolation, exploitation and removal from social interaction. This bill protects persons with disabilities and the elderly while holding guardians accountable for their treatment of those under their care and control. Sen. Jensen sponsored this bill with such vigor that by the time I blinked my eyes, the bill cleared both chambers and was signed by the governor.

South Dakota is the first state to pass the Peter Falk Act in the same session as a bill for South Dakota seniors and adults with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation. I am so honored and excited that the Peter Falk Act has passed in the 2016 session of South Dakota

Catherine Falk

South Dakota News: Peter Falk Bill

2016



Catherine started the Catherine Falk Organization, which worked with the National Association to Stop Guardian Abuse, or NASGA, to draft legislation ensuring individuals can be visited by family members or other loved ones. At present, the guardian has unbridled discretion to stop visitation. Their work together focused on a range of situations in which elders and disabled adults across the country are left vulnerable to the people with legal responsibility over their rights.

When I met Catherine and Marcia Southwick of NASGA and learned of their work, I wanted to make sure Maine families are protected from experiencing such heartbreaking situations. Much of my work as a lawmaker has focused on improving life for aging and disabled Mainers, and sponsoring the Peter Falk bill should be part of that work.

I asked legislative leadership to allow lawmakers to consider an after-deadline bill so a solution could be considered as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the Legislative Council did not allow the measure to move forward at that time.

Despite the setback, the measure has been resubmitted for consideration during the coming session. The problem is too serious and its impact on families too tragic to continue to remain unaddressed in Maine law.

The bill would ensure that close relatives such as children and siblings are informed of their loved one's hospitalization or death. It also would allow legal recourse when immediate family members are wrongfully denied the right to see an ailing loved one.

We strongly believe that families should have somewhere to turn when they are needlessly barred from seeing a sick or incapacitated loved one. Just as importantly, those who cannot speak for themselves should not be isolated from the people who care about them.

In recent years, the importance of knowing the signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation of the elderly and incapacitated has become more widely recognized. Preventing their isolation is a crucial step to protecting some of Maine's most vulnerable citizens.

There are many devoted guardians who act in the best interest of the person they care for, but in some situations that isn't the case. Passing the Falk bill here in Maine will help defend those who are falling through the cracks.

Catherine's story began with her determination to see the father she loved with all her heart. Her experience and the stories of other families across the country have inspired us to advocate for measures that protect vulnerable citizens and their right to be surrounded by those they love. We and others in Maine are working hard to ensure that lawmakers pass the Falk bill this upcoming session.

Rep. Arthur "Archie" Verow, D-Brewer, is serving his second term in the Maine House. Catherine Falk, daughter of actor Peter Falk, is a nationwide advocate

Maine News: Rep. Verow, Sponsorship Peter Falk's Law

2016



Peter Falk's Law designed to protect Alzheimer's and dementia patients

By Anthony J. Enea

October 6, 2016 No Comments

Editor's Note: A bill similar to New York's recently enacted Falk's Law was introduced in the Connecticut General Assembly early this year. An amended version was unanimously approved by state lawmakers' Joint Aging Committee in March but the legislation has not yet come to a vote of the full assembly.

For 10 years, Peter Falk brilliantly portrayed Lieutenant Columbo, an LAPD detective of Italian descent, in the hit television series "Columbo." While wearing his trademark wrinkled raincoat, chronically absent-minded and perpetually disheveled, Columbo would quickly and intellectually disarm a suspected murderer. Through skilled and insightful questioning and with a keen eye for detail, he was able to solve the most complex homicides.

However, putting Hollywood fantasies aside, Falk, a native New Yorker and graduate of Ossining High School, sadly is said to have spent his last days suffering from the ravages of Alzheimer's disease while allegedly isolated from his family and friends by his second wife, his court-appointed conservator under California law. As Falk's conservator, she allegedly prevented his daughter and other family members from visiting him, failed to notify them of major changes in his condition and even allegedly failed to notify them of his demise in 2011 and his funeral arrangements.

Because of her heartbreaking experience, his daughter, Catherine Falk, has fought to have legislation passed nationwide, known as Peter Falk's Law, that provides specific guidelines that guardians and conservators for an incapacitated person must comply with relevant to visitation rights and notice of end of life.

In New York, the bill was signed into law on July 21 by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Thus, New York has become one of the many states that have adopted Peter Falk's Law.

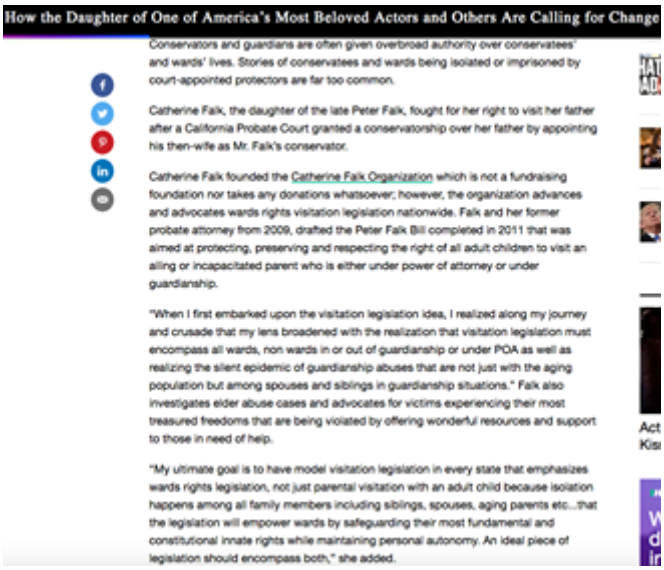
As a result, the Mental Hygiene Law of New York was amended with three new paragraphs relevant to guardianship duties. They provide as follows:

- The order of appointment shall identify the person entitled to receive notice of the incapacitated person's death, the intended disposition of the remains of the decedent, funeral arrangements and final resting place when that information is known or can be reasonably ascertained by the guardian.
- The order of appointment may identify the person or persons entitled to notice of the incapacitated person's transfer to a medical facility.
- The order of appointment may identify the person entitled to visit the incapacitated person, if they so choose. However, the identification of such persons in the order shall in no way limit the person entitled to visit the incapacitated person.

Clearly, the intent of Peter Falk's Law is to ensure that children from a previous marriage, as well as other family members, are not denied the right to visit their incapacitated parent or loved one by a current spouse who is a guardian/conservator with whom they may have a poor relationship. The law in essence requires that the court address the issue of visitation, notice of transfer to a medical facility and death in its initial order appointing a guardian for the incapacitated person. Ultimately, the goal is to prevent a guardian from improperly isolating his or her ward and limiting visitation.

New York News: Peter Falk's Law

2016



How the Daughter of One of America's Most Beloved Actors and Others Are Calling for Change

Conservators and guardians are often given overbroad authority over conservatees' and wards' lives. Stories of conservatees and wards being isolated or imprisoned by court-appointed protectors are far too common.

Catherine Falk, the daughter of the late Peter Falk, fought for her right to visit her father after a California Probate Court granted a conservatorship over her father by appointing his then-wife as Mr. Falk's conservator.

Catherine Falk founded the Catherine Falk Organization which is not a fundraising foundation nor takes any donations whatsoever; however, the organization advances and advocates wards rights visitation legislation nationwide. Falk and her former probate attorney from 2009, drafted the Peter Falk Bill completed in 2011 that was aimed at protecting, preserving and respecting the right of all adult children to visit an ailing or incapacitated parent who is either under power of attorney or under guardianship.

"When I first embarked upon the visitation legislation idea, I realized along my journey and crusade that my lens broadened with the realization that visitation legislation must encompass all wards, non wards in or out of guardianship or under POA as well as realizing the silent epidemic of guardianship abuses that are not just with the aging population but among spouses and siblings in guardianship situations." Falk also investigates elder abuse cases and advocates for victims experiencing their most treasured freedoms that are being violated by offering wonderful resources and support to those in need of help.

"My ultimate goal is to have model visitation legislation in every state that emphasizes wards rights legislation, not just parental visitation with an adult child because isolation happens among all family members including siblings, spouses, aging parents etc...that the legislation will empower wards by safeguarding their most fundamental and constitutional innate rights while maintaining personal autonomy. An ideal piece of legislation should encompass both," she added.

How the Daughter of One of America's Most Beloved Actors and Others are Calling for Change