

**House Finance**

**03/25/2024 01:30 PM**

**HB24-1132 Support for Living Organ Donors**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
David Schwartz For themselves	<p>My name is David Schwartz, and I am a constituent. I help my wife Naomi Jacobs with her dialysis a minimum of 4 days a week, 16 hours per week but it can take much longer depending upon the equipment, her needle insertions and removals, as well as maintenance tasks. There's no rushing the process, which is one reason why I am not giving live testimony right now. Also, I accompany her to all appointments too. I do errands on Tuesdays and Thursdays leaving Saturdays off barring emergencies. Kidney disease impacts the patient as well as their family members who worry about and care for them.</p> <p>There's also a financial impact for our marriage as well as for other families. Many patients and their care partners (my preferred term to caregiver) leave employment because of healthcare needs. As her spouse, I have been deemed ineligible to be her paid caregiver under the state's Medicaid waiver as opposed to being an adult child or parent of the patient. I could be bringing money into the home along with paying taxes.</p> <p>I urge you to support HB 24-1132 (Support For Living Organ Donors) that will save both tens of thousands of lives and billions dollars in the long run.</p> <p>Thank you. Be safe and well.</p>
Mark Hellberg For themselves	<p>My name is Mark Hellberg. I live in Broomfield, Colorado. I am a living kidney donor (donated 2 years ago) and a 66 year old grandparent of two amazing (aren't all grandchildren amazing) grandchildren who live in Erie Colorado. This is how I became to be a living kidney donor. I had a friend, also a grandparent, who had end stage kidney</p>

	<p>disease and was undergoing dialysis. This meant she had to go to a dialysis clinic for 4 hour sessions 3 days a week. The dialysis session helped her survive. She never felt good, she just felt less bad. Unfortunately, her grandchildren live a significant distance away which made it impossible for her to see her grandchildren.</p> <p>Covid taught my wife and I how terrible it was not to be able to see our grandchildren. We couldn't imagine how hard it must be for our friend and her family. The decision to offer to help was a no brainer for us. Initial screening determined I was not a direct match. I thought this was the end, but the donation coordinator told me about the voucher process. I would donate to somebody I didn't know, and my friend would be prioritized on the living donor list. Although it is impossible due to matching challenges to provide a firm number, we were told her wait would be reduced to 2-4 months from 5-10 years! My wife and I decided to continue the process. Family and especially grandchildren are such a gift – how could we make any other decision. I qualified and donated a kidney just over two years ago. The surgery went well, and the recovery was easy. My donated kidney was implanted and did what a kidney is supposed to do. Good news. More good news, because of the voucher, my friend received a kidney from a living kidney donor within months of my donation and got her life back. She is now able to enjoy her grandchildren.</p> <p>I was fortunate, I was able to take the time for the surgery and recovery. There are many grandparents and grandchildren that are not as fortunate as our grandchildren. They are unable to get together and enjoy that precious time together because either the grandparent or grandchild is tethered to the dialysis process. The CARE for Living Donors Act lowers the barrier to living kidney donation. By providing protection from workplace discrimination and a tax credit to donors, more people will be able to make the gift of life without fear of incurring an economic burden. For me this Act simply means that more grandparents and grandchildren get to enjoy time together. How amazing is that?</p>
<p>Patrick Lepak For himself</p>	<p>Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. My name is Patrick Lepak. I live in house district 5, and I am representing myself as a living organ donor. I am supporting house bill HB24-1132 because I believe that its protections would allow and encourage more people to become living organ donors, at minimal taxpayer expense.</p>

	<p>In particular, I'd like to stress the importance of the bill's Workforce Discrimination Protection.</p> <p>I donated my kidney in June of 2021. The medical tests and interviews that make up the donor evaluation process are appropriately significant and thorough, but they are also time consuming. I work full time, and while my employer knew that I was going through the process, I had to shift my hours and spread out appointments to limit the amount of time that I was away from work. Knowing I didn't fall into typical policies around illness and medical time off, I had to navigate a delicate path between a life-saving donation and consequences at work. Knowing that my job would have been protected would have been an immense help, and I know that many potential donors have even less flexible jobs than my own.</p> <p>This same concern also applies to recovery time after the donation surgery. Thankfully, I work in an office setting where I could work remotely to an extent even as I was healing, but many jobs require far more time off before heavy lifting, physical movement, or travel. Those individuals especially need the protections in this bill to ensure that they do not need to choose between saving someone's life and keeping their job.</p> <p>These protections do not require cost to the taxpayer. The additional tax credit provisions should be minimal because the number of donors involved would remain relatively small. While, broadly speaking, few people become living organ donors, their impact is significant, and a small amount of tax credits can save lives.</p> <p>Living organ donation is a proven way to save lives, and I believe that our state should do its part in removing obstacles that might prevent our citizens from donating.</p> <p>Thank you, and I ask for your yes vote today.</p>
<p>Patty Graham For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Patty Graham.</p> <p>Twenty one years ago, my sister donated her kidney to our stepdad, and he is still thriving with it today. Witnessing the impact it made on his life and seeing my sister recover, and live a normal healthy life, inspired me to become a donor. 6 years ago, I donated my left kidney</p>

	<p>to a stranger and launched a kidney chain for multiple people to benefit from a lifesaving kidney transplant. I now mentor prospective donors with the National Kidney Donation Organization. I've also created the Colorado One Kidney Club and have coordinated the establishment of 42 other one kidney clubs throughout the country.</p> <p>If I had more kidneys to donate, I would. As a nurse and a kidney donor mentor, I have known so many others who are dying and need their lives saved. We need to eliminate the obstacle of financial hardship on the donor, and that is what the CARE Act will accomplish.</p> <p>When someone steps forward to say, "Remove one of my vital organs because someone needs it way more than me," we should reward them. Donation isn't easy. It takes time, financial resources, commitment, and a willingness to feel some temporary pain so another person can stop feeling the ongoing pain of dialysis and get their life back. This impacts the recipient, their families, friends, future generations, and every life that recipient touches -which ripples out. This also impacts the life of the donor. As a donor, I can confidently say my life is infinitely better since I've donated, and it was the best decision I have ever made. This impact on me -also ripples out.</p> <p>I've heard a dialysis patient describe dialysis as a "living death". Let's not make those on the waitlist wait so long that they join the 12,000 people every year who are removed from the waitlist because they become too sick to be transplanted.</p> <p>Let's put our caring for the lives of our Colorado neighbors into action and provide those dying from kidney failure with the gold standard of kidney care, a living kidney transplant. Let's pass the CARE for All Living Donors Act in 2024. Thank you</p>
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