

Sponsor Testimony for HB 476 – Representative Kyle Koehler

Chairman Green, Vice Chair Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee: thank you for allowing me to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 476.

HB 476 does one simple thing. It directs the BMV to ask its customers to donate \$1 to Ohio's Second Chance Trust Fund more regularly than they currently do. The Second Chance Trust Fund (also known as SCTF) was established in 1997 to support projects that raise awareness about the importance of organ, eye and tissue donation throughout the state. The fund is managed by the Ohio Department of Health, but uses no tax funds. Optional \$1 contributions collected at the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles are used to support donation education in Ohio.

Today I am wearing a lapel pin associated with the Green Chair Campaign, which calls to mind the many different people affected by organ, eye and tissue donation. Recipients. Donor families. Those waiting for a transplant – and the families of those who died waiting. I'd like to share my personal experience as one of the donor families represented by this pin.

In January of 2013, just five years ago last month, my family suffered a significant loss. My brother Kurt, who was 54 years old, an avid snow skier and someone I looked up to - suffered a massive heart attack. By the time Kurt arrived at the hospital, there was very little the doctors could do. His brain had gone far too long without oxygen, and after consultation with his doctors, we realized he would not recover.

During this incredibly dark time, the one spark of light came when the doctors told us that Kurt had chosen to be an organ donor, and was eligible to donate. We realized that in death, Kurt could provide hope and life to others.

My brother's unselfish decision affected the lives of dozens of others waiting for life-saving organ transplants, and my sister-in-law has had the chance to meet some of those individuals who received her husband's organs. Kurt changed the lives of others because he made an informed choice.

Many people are not aware of their organ donor status, and others might be reluctant to register as organ donors because of misconceptions about what being an organ, eye, or tissue donor entails. Money from the Second Chance Trust Fund is used to ensure all Ohioans have the information they need to understand and make an educated decision about donation.

Awareness-building projects have included:

- A **Driver's Education Curriculum** regarding organ, eye and tissue donation
- A statewide organ, eye and tissue donation **curriculum for high schools**
- Statewide **awareness campaigns**

The BMV currently asks only an individual renewing a license if he or she would like to donate \$1 to support the fund – that's once every four years. **Under House Bill 476, the BMV would not only ask Ohioans if they would like to donate \$1 to the fund when renewing their license, but also when they apply for a driver's license, a motorcycle endorsement, or state ID card. It would also direct the BMV to ask persons renewing their car's registration whether they'd like to donate.**

At this moment, hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant so they can have a second chance at life. Sadly, there are not enough organ donors to meet the growing need, resulting in the deaths of 20 of these individuals each day.

If more people, like my brother Kurt, made the choice to become organ donors, many more lives could be saved. The Second Chance Trust Fund helps educate folks before they're faced with that decision. This bill will allow Ohioans to voluntarily make the decision to support this literally vital work.

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today. I will be glad to answer any questions you might have.