

House Bill 476 Testimony
Chris Nance
Cornea Transplant Recipient

Chairman Green, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in support of House Bill 476. My name is Chris Nance, and I can look out and see everyone in this room clearly thanks to my generous cornea donor.

As a young child, I was diagnosed with an eye disorder known as Subluxated Lenses. Over time, my condition caused my lenses to become detached from my eyes and I began to experience distorted sight before I was three years old. At the age of four, doctors performed a number of - at the time - experimental procedures to place donor corneas on top of my eyes. My donor's corneas still serve as my permanent lenses today. Thanks to the unselfish gift of a deceased donor, I am able to see today with very little corrective help.

My sight is not a gift I take for granted. The importance of not only cornea donation, but organ and tissue donation are very important in the lives of my family.

My wife Ashley is a nurse practitioner and transplant coordinator for Nationwide Children's Hospital Lung and Heart/Lung Transplant program. The program evaluates the young patients to determine if they are candidates for transplantation, provides education to those patients and their families, and assists with their post-transplant care.

Ashley's passion for her transplant patients and my own experience with donation has led us to actively advocate and help educate people about the desperate need for organ, eye and tissue donation.

I was happy to come and testify on behalf of House Bill 476 because I myself work in the Communications field. I know that increased education, as well as continued public messaging are the most effective ways to persuade Ohioans to consider donation and help prevent deaths on the organ waiting list. There are so many prevailing myths and misconceptions that keep people from registering to become donors and the voluntary dollars contributed through the Second Chance Trust Fund are vital to developing statewide programs and campaigns to help dispel those misconceptions.

When people think about donation, it's organ donation that comes to mind. We talk about organs as Gifts of Life because they save people – including my wife's young patients – from inevitable death. But the healing gifts of tissue and cornea donation are just as powerful and important to consider. For me, receiving a donor's corneas didn't save my life, but their gift undoubtedly enhanced the QUALITY of my life. For this I am very grateful -- and hopeful – for, you see, my son Breckin has unfortunately inherited the same eye condition that I have. So,

I am here today to personally ask you to support House Bill 476 and its intention to increase the money available for donor education programs in our great state of Ohio.