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Sponsor Testimony House Bill 332
Health Committee
October 11th, 2017

Chair Huffman, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 332, which would ensure that individuals with disabilities will not be banned from an organ transplant waitlist solely based on their disability.

This bill stemmed from the discrimination of individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities face in relation to organ transplant waitlists. According to a 2013 report by the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), individuals with mental and physical disabilities have historically been denied life-saving organ transplants based on assumptions that their lives are less worthy, that they are incapable of complying with post-transplant medical regimens, or that they lack adequate support systems to ensure such compliance.

Although organ transplant centers must consider medical criteria when determining if a patient is suitable to receive an organ transplant, transplant centers that participate in Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal funding programs are required to use patient selection criteria that result in a fair and non-discriminatory distribution of organs. Ohio residents in need of organ transplants are entitled to assurances that they will not encounter discrimination based on a disability. A physical or intellectual disability should not bar someone from live-saving healthcare. As well, those living with disabilities like down syndrome and autism can live full and joyful lives and should not be denied a transplant on a medical basis.

Five states (Pennsylvania, Maryland, California, New Jersey, and Massachusetts) have passed similar bipartisan legislation to prevent organ transplant waitlist discrimination, and 3 more (Kansas, Delaware, and Oregon) currently have bills working their way through state legislatures.

House Bill 332 would create a solution to this by ensuring these individuals will receive the same treatment on organ transplant waitlists as everyone else.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 332. I would be happy to take any questions.