

Testimony of the National Kidney Foundation

H.B. 399, to Expand Opportunities for Living Organ Donation

Presented to the Committee on Ways and Means

May 14, 2024

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 399. House Bill 399 effectively addresses economic barriers to living organ donation, enabling more people to receive the Gift of Life. I, Aparna Padiyar, have been a nephrologist in Northeast Ohio for over 15 years, and am honored to testify on behalf of the National Kidney Foundation.

Kidney disease affects 1 in 7 adults, and unfortunately 90% of those effected are not aware. Kidney disease in its advanced stages can be life threatening, confers a poor quality of life, and requires kidney replacement therapy for survival—either transplant or dialysis. End stage kidney disease is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. Dialysis has an associated mortality rate of over 20% per year, that is, one out of five people will die every year on dialysis. Transplant, particularly living donor transplant, can dramatically decrease the mortality of end stage kidney disease by at least half, and is associated with much better quality of life and cost. The average half-life of living donor kidneys is about 19 years, compared to 12 years for deceased donor kidneys (Poggio, 2020).

Indeed, the best care for end stage kidney disease is transplantation before dialysis, achieved by less than 10% of patients in the United States (King, 2019). Even among healthy potential donors able to get through the rigorous screening process, barriers include lack of knowledge about kidney transplant, adverse social determinants, and financial ramifications (Zazoulina, 2022).

By creating an employer tax credit to encourage the provision of paid leave for employees who become living donors, House Bill 399 helps address economic disincentives to donating. Living donors are heroes,

and should not suffer financial hardship for their altruistic act. Employers should be commended for including such supportive policies as an employee benefit.

In conclusion, I appreciate your consideration and your leadership in assisting more people to get the life-saving best care possible for end stage kidney disease.

Respectfully,

Aparna Padiyar, MD

References

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