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Health Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
Proponent Testimony
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Testimony in Support of Ohio Bill No. 252 to Designate January as “Blood Donor Awareness Month.”

Pam Klatte is a blood recipient and supporter of Community Blood Center. She is unable to attend the Sept. 13 Health Committee Hearing but has provided her written testimony.

Good morning,

My name is Pamela Klatte. I live in Troy, Ohio and work for Troy City Schools at Troy High School. I feel very fortunate and honored to be here today to speak to you.

On April 5, 2014, my husband, Joe and I were on our way home from our spring break vacation in Florida. We were on northbound I-75, approximately 50 miles south of Macon, Georgia. We went off the right side of a ramp and down a steep incline.

The SUV hit a large tree on the passenger side hinges, bounced off and rolled once. During the ride down I turned to look at Joe and saw him bounce twice on the center console with his chin. He was not conscious. I was awake until we had the impact with the tree and must have been knocked unconscious.

I was awakened by people talking to me through my passenger side window. Joe was still unconscious and partially laying on my lap. I screamed at him and tried to wake him. My thoughts were running quickly through my brain. I thought he was dead and how was I going to tell our children.

By now they are working to hold the car in place on the incline so it did not shift and roll more. I knew I could not move but thankfully felt no pain. A woman asked if she could call someone for us and I gave her our youngest son's number.

She called and told him his mother and father had had a very serious accident in Georgia. Your mother is trapped in the vehicle and your father is unresponsive. I am an RN and I need to go and hang up on him.

As I think back, what terror he must have felt. The firemen came soon after with the “Jaws of Life” and cut off my door. They put me in the air evacuation helicopter that was waiting and flew me to Macon medical center.

They did x-rays and accessed my injuries and determined that they were not able to help me. I was unaware of it but by then they had transported Joe there also. I was sedated and have no first-hand accounts of what happened next.

I know that they then transported me by air evacuation to Grady Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. They immediately took me to surgery. I had a broken femur and a broken hip. My right leg from the knee down was badly damaged.

Our youngest son Kevin picked up his brother J.C. and wife Michelle and headed south on I-75 with no destination in mind. My daughter-in-law told me that they traveled in total silence until they received a call from Joe as they passed through Chattanooga, Tennessee. In that call, Joe told them to go to Grady Hospital in Atlanta. Our boys arrived at Grady while I was in surgery.

A friend of ours, that was also on his way home from Florida, heard about the accident, stopped to check on Joe in Macon and stayed with him and then took him to Atlanta. Joe finally arrived at the hospital at 4:00 am. He had a broken foot and was very beat up. It was an absolute nightmare for all of us.

When I finally came to, my son Kevin was sitting next to me. I asked him, "Kevin how is your dad?" He said, "Mom, dad is doing great. Here he comes." Once I knew that he had survived, my leg did not matter.

A lot of time passed between the accident and the first surgery to repair my femur and hip and stabilize my leg. I lost a lot of blood.

I had a surgery every other day to clean out the wounds and reconstruct. After several surgeries, I started having breathing issues. I was no longer able to breathe on my own. They had to intubate me. My body had had enough traumas and on the 12th day the surgeon and plastic surgeon determined that there was nothing else they could do for the leg.

On April 17 they amputated my right leg below the knee. I immediately started to get better. Including the skin grafts, I had 11 surgeries in 21 days.

Finally, after a month, on May 5 they transported me by ambulance to Kettering Medical Center for rehab. I remained there for two weeks and was then able to return home. What a happy day!

The healing process has taken a very long time. I spent 16 months with no leg and in a wheelchair. I received my first leg and graduated to a walker and wheelchair. In October of 2016 my leg was finally fully healed. I received a more permanent leg and started to walk on a cane.

I am in therapy this summer to strengthen and learn to walk with no aid. This brings me to the present.

I do not have an exact count of how many blood transfusions I had. All they said is that I had many. Without them I don't know if I would be here today. We need to stress the importance of donating.

I used to donate blood but did not fully realize how important it was until I became a recipient myself. We need to stress that by being a generous donor you truly have the ability to save lives.