

October 9, 2017

Chair Huffman, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Health Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide 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 issue is important to me because it is a cruel and discriminatory practice to deny life saving efforts on the basis of a diagnosis of Down syndrome. Although I believe relying on medical expertise is important, there are areas in which medical professionals lack the expertise necessary to make informed decisions about their patients care.

For example, I testified on behalf of Ohio House Bill 552

(http://archives.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB_552) because terminating my pregnancy was brought up by two obstetricians; doctors you would presume had a level of expertise, but statistics referenced were outdated, consultation with peers was refused and neither had any first hand experience understanding the diagnosis of Down syndrome. Luckily, we chose to continue the pregnancy. With an additional diagnosis of non-immune fetal hydrops, we knew even with bleak outlook medically, there was still a chance of survival, albeit small. In my career as a developmental disabilities professional and advocate, I knew of plenty of individuals with Down syndrome who drove, went to college, worked full time, married, lived independently, and were happy contributing members of their community. My daughter should NEVER be denied life saving efforts because she has Down syndrome. We fought to bring our daughter into this world, please help us ensure she is provided the all the rights she deserves.

This bill clearly defines a human right. Whether or not a person has Down syndrome, or any other disability, should not define their access to life-saving procedures like organ transplantation.

Thank you for your work in representing me as a constituent in your district. I truly appreciate your support and thank you for your support of House Bill 332.

With High Regards,

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