



October 9, 2017

Dear 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 discriminated against on organ transplant waitlists solely based on their disability.

I joined the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Cincinnati (DSAGC) as Executive Director in 2012. The DSAGC is one of the largest regional affiliate organizations dedicated to Down syndrome in the U.S.; we serve more than 1,400 individuals from 12 counties across Greater Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky, and Southeastern Indiana. Our community is broad and far-reaching. Down syndrome impacts people of all races, cultures, and economic backgrounds

We wholeheartedly support the Organ Transplant Waitlist Anti-Discrimination Bill and thank Representative Niraj Antani for introducing it to The Ohio House of Representatives. Children and adults with Down syndrome are a vital part of our society – they attend school, play sports, are active in the arts, work, vote, volunteer in their communities, and make a long-lasting and important impact on their friends, family, and coworkers.

This legislation will help to protect the people we serve, and their human rights, from discrimination when they are in need of life-saving organ transplants. People with Down syndrome often deal with a host of other medical challenges, from issues that are inconvenient to life-threatening health problems. Nearly half of people born with Down syndrome also have congenital heart disease. In the past three decades, life expectancy for individuals with Down syndrome has grown from 25 years old to 60. This is due to advances in medical care; integration, inclusion and support in communities; and progressive and fair legislation. Please help us continue this progress by passing HB 332.

We hear stories of children and adults with Down syndrome being denied transplants or needing to go out of state for medical care because they cannot find a professional who believes in the value of their loved one's life, close to home. We have families within our own Tri-State community that have lost loved ones due in part to lack of access to an organ transplant. This is not acceptable and values the lives of individuals without a developmental disability above those with disabilities. The people we serve deserve the same dignity, respect and right to a long life as any other Ohio resident.

I encourage you to join the handful of other forward-thinking states who have already passed similar legislation. Our community thanks you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Hudson".

Jim Hudson
Executive Director
Down Syndrome Association of Greater Cincinnati