

October 5, 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 wait list solely based on their disability.

This issue is important to me because my oldest son has Down syndrome, and he was born with a heart defect. Thankfully, his heart was repaired by a skilled surgeon and he is now doing very well. However, had his heart been beyond repair, we would have watched him suffer and ultimately pass away because he would not have even been considered for a heart transplant. Our state prides itself on many aspects of the Pro-Life stance, so for this type of discrimination to exist is simply shameful. It's time for change, and we need our elected officials to stand up and protect the most vulnerable members of our communities.

As you can see, I wholeheartedly support the Organ Transplant Waitlist Anti-Discrimination Bill. Children and adults with Down syndrome and other disabilities are incredible members in our society: they play sports, attend college, work, and positively impact their communities in so many ways. 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,

Jennifer Franklin Kearns

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