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Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
Blood Donor Awareness Month (Huffman)
Supportive Testimony
11/14/17

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, and Ranking Member Tavares: thank you for the opportunity to provide supporting testimony for the Blood Donor Awareness Month.

I have been a blood and blood component donor for probably 30 years. I have been blessed with good health and juicy veins to be able to give a part of myself to save a life. I intend to do this for as long as I am able. I even plan vacations around locations: if the Blood Center says that if I go to that port of call, I will be deferred from giving for 6-12 months, I simply do not go to that city or on that cruise.

I had been donating whole blood for many years when someone asked me to give a part of my blood, platelets. In the beginning, they used a needle in each arm. One to withdraw a certain amount, centrifuge it so the platelets were drawn off, and the other arm to return the rest of the blood which was not needed. It took about 3 hours and a nurse had to stay with you at all times.

One day the nurse went to the product that was being withdrawn and put a tag on it. When I asked her what the tag was for, she said it had the name of the person who would receive my platelets!! She could not tell me the name of the patient but she could tell me that she was at Wright Patterson Hospital with cancer and was in need of platelets. Right then and there I was hooked for life. My simple act of giving up 3 hours of time to actually save a life...there is no greater feeling in the world.

I now go into the Center almost every two weeks to donate one unit. I am in a race with another lady to see who reaches 500 units first and sadly, it will be her and hopefully yet this year. We are fierce competitors to save lives!

About 2 years ago, my brother-in-law fell and suffered a devastating head injury. He needed 3-4 units of platelets. His wife and all of his family are so thankful that there

were donors like me so his life was saved. I of course tease him that he now acts like me because he has my platelets in him!

I can donate up to 24 times a year and it takes about 2 hours in total. That means that I spend up to 28 hours giving of myself to save a life. A little more than one day and I have done something that no one else can do. In this day and age when so many parts of a human body can be replaced, it still takes one person donating blood or a blood component if a patient needs blood or a blood component.

I remember one December and I got a call that a child at Children's' hospital needed white blood cells to live. His family just wanted one more Christmas with him. I along with several other donors had to take medication to increase our white blood cells in order to give. There were side effects of the medication but none of us cared. We gave day after day and he lived until Mid-January. His family was so thankful that they had that one more Christmas and I got to be a part of giving that gift to them.

My thanks go to Chairman Huffman for taking the leadership to introduce this bill and to take the leadership in the House to get this important awareness effort in the spotlight of all Ohioans. The blood and blood component supply must be donated by volunteers. Can you imagine any better way to volunteer than to actually know that you save lives? I stand ready to assist Chairman Huffman in any way possible to get the word out to help recruit volunteers.

Yes, this is my passion; yes I have been called a vampire; yes I get great cookies every time I donate; yes I am in a competition to give the most; but mainly, yes, I get to save lives.

Thank you for your time.