

May 17, 2021

The Honorable Thomas Brinkman Jr., Chair
The Honorable Brian Lampton, Vice-Chair
The Honorable Jessica Miranda, Ranking Member
Ohio House Committee on Insurance
77 High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Ohio House Bill 188 (Lampton), Living Donor Protection Act, SUPPORT

Dear Chair Brinkman, Vice-Chair Lampton, Ranking Member Miranda and Members of the Committee on Insurance:

On behalf of all the people we serve in Ohio, including the 27,073 residents currently living with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) I respectfully request your support for [HB 188](#), which prohibits insurance companies from discriminating against people based on their status as an organ donor.

The American Kidney Fund (AKF), based in Rockville, Maryland is the nation's leading nonprofit organization working on behalf of the 37 million Americans living with kidney disease, and the millions more at risk, with an unmatched scope of programs that support people wherever they are in their fight against kidney disease, from prevention through transplant. With programs that address early detection, disease management, financial assistance, clinical research, innovation and advocacy, no kidney organization impacts more lives than AKF. We are also one of the nation's top-rated nonprofits, investing 97 cents of every donated dollar in programs, AKF has also received the highest 4-Star rating from Charity Navigator for 19 consecutive years, as well as the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Guidestar.

While most transplanted organs are from deceased donors, patients may also receive organs from living donors. Living donation offers an alternative for individuals awaiting transplantation from a deceased donor and increases the existing organ supply. Over 6,000 living-donor transplants were performed last year in the United States. Kidneys are the most common organ transplanted from living donors, followed by liver and lung. Both living and deceased donation offer hope to nearly 110,000 people waiting for an organ transplant right now—including more than 95,000 who are waiting for a kidney transplant. In addition to transforming the life of the kidney patient, a transplant is a boon to society. The cost of a transplant is lower than long-term kidney dialysis, and it gives the transplant recipient a greater ability to remain in or return to the workforce.

Unfortunately, studies have shown that people who donate organs experience discrimination by insurance companies solely based on their status as an organ donor. For example, an NIH study¹ demonstrated that a high proportion of kidney donors had difficulty changing or initiating insurance, particularly life insurance.² The study concluded that “[t]hese practices by insurers create unnecessary burdens and stress for those choosing to donate and could negatively impact the likelihood of live kidney

¹ Boyarsky BJ, Massie AB, Alejo JL, et al. Experiences obtaining insurance after live kidney donation. *Am J Transplant.* 2014;14(9):2168-72. Can be found at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4194161/>

² *Id.*

donation among those considering donation.”³ Further, extensive research has demonstrated that people who donate a kidney are likely to live just as long as similarly healthy people who have both kidneys.⁴

We believe that removing burdens for living donors can lead to an increase in organ donations. For these reasons, we are hopeful for your support of this and any future legislation that could help improve the lives of those fighting kidney disease.

Thank you again for your leadership and for your consideration of this important issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at any time.

Sincerely,

Melanie Lynn Lendnal

Melanie Lynn Lendnal
American Kidney Fund
Director, State Policy and Advocacy

³ *Id.*

⁴ Segev DL, Muzaale AD, Caffo BS, et al. Perioperative Mortality and Long-term Survival Following Live Kidney Donation. *JAMA*. 2010;303(10):959–966. doi:10.1001/jama.2010.237. *Can be found at:* <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/185508>