

Dear Chair Brinkman and Members of the House Insurance Committee,

I am writing to ask for your support for passage of Ohio's HB 188. This bill will protect living donors from discrimination from insurance companies. Currently, insurance companies can raise prices or refuse coverage based solely on an individual's status as a living organ donor. This can deter a potential living donor, resulting in fewer living donations thereby increasing the waiting list, lowering the productivity and quality of life for members of the kidney community, and increasing costs to taxpayers.

As a member of the chronic kidney disease community, I can attest that living donors go through rigorous testing. To qualify as a living donor an individual must be in optimum health. I was on dialysis for 4 years, 8 months, and 3 days before receiving a cadaveric kidney transplant. During that time, I had 3 potential donors. The first altruistic donor passed every test except for the last one. The second donor failed the very first test. The third was undergoing expanded testing, even at the risk of losing her job, at the time a cadaveric kidney transplant came through.

Since testing for living donors is so rigorous, insurance companies can rest assured that there is no increased actuarial risk based solely on having the status of living donor. The law should prevent employers from discriminating against their staff for their altruism. Please support Ohio HB 188 to prevent discrimination against living donors.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jami S. Bell

Of Bedford