March 12, 2018

Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and Members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 332, which would ensure that individuals with disabilities will not be banned from an organ transplant waitlist solely based on their disability.

I am writing about Ohio House Bill 332 after learning that individuals with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing life-saving organ transplants. The Americans with Disability Act provides loose protections against discrimination for people with disabilities, but often families don’t realize they have recourse when their loved one is denied a transplant. Discrimination is often hard to prove. Medical staff may decide not to refer a person with a disability to an organ transplant center.

As a mother to a one-year-old daughter, Lynnyx, that has Down syndrome, I could never imagine being faced with this sort of discrimination. My child should have the same opportunity for a life-saving organ donation if ever she would need one. H.B. 332 clearly defines a human right, and ensures that families like mine can advocate for their child with a disability when they need it the most. A disability should not define a person’s access to life-saving care.

My child should be afforded greater legal protection. Her life and every individual that has Down syndrome or other disabilities are inherently worth saving. Thank you for your support of H.B. 332.

With high regards,

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