

February 13th, 2024, 1:00 PM
House Transportation Committee
House Bill 224

Good afternoon, Chairman McClain, Vice-Chairman Dobos, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the Transportation Committee. For the record, my name is Timothy Snyder, I am the Vice President of Operations for Nationwide Organ Recovery Transport Alliance, also known as NORA and I am here to testify in support of House Bill 224.

Current system:

- Time sensitive lifesaving organs have been and are currently being transported by the existing EMS system because they have the authority to use lights & sirens.
- Less time sensitive organs, organs on perfusion pumps, tissue donors, and transplant surgeons are currently being transported in NORA vehicles since October of 2018 in Columbus and now has expanded to Cleveland since May of 2023. Unfortunately, NORA vehicles are currently restricted from utilizing lights and sirens.

Statement of problem:

- Currently in the United States there are over 114,000 individuals waiting for a Life-saving transplant. Over 3,000 are right here in Ohio. These individuals depend on the Donation and Transplant Community for their second chance at life as well as the families who said yes to organ donation to save another when they have experienced the loss of a loved one.
- Organ Donation and the number of organs available has increased year after year for the past ten years and the current Federal Organ Allocation policy has mandated sharing organs over greater distances, including across state lines.
- The EMS system is already stretched, organ transport is a secondary mission behind 911 emergencies. There are increasing incidents of organ teams standing at the hospital ER with a heart or lungs in a cooler, and the ambulance was called away to a 911 emergency, causing delay and some organs to be rendered non-transplantable.

Solution:

- Legislation allowing dedicated organ transport vehicles, that won't be called away, with highly experienced teams, to transport time sensitive organs with the use of lights and sirens, when indicated and as outlined in this legislation.
- Dedicated organ transport vehicles driven only by experienced Police Officers, Fire Fighters and many of the same EMS staff that currently transport organs who work for the 911 system, who NORA currently employs on staff.

- These individuals have been vetted in a process that includes Criminal Background Checks, Clear Driving record through the DMV, Drug screening, and an Emergency Vehicle Operator (EVO) and Defensive Driving Course.

In closing I would like to add that time matters when saving the life of those who wait for a transplant and thank Representative Miller for initiating HB 224.

Thank you to the Transportation Committee and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,
Timothy J. Snyder