



May 14, 2024

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 399.

The UC Health Transplant Program provides kidney and heart transplantation services and is the only adult liver and pancreas transplantation provider in southwestern Ohio. In calendar year (CY) 2023, the UC Health Transplant Program performed over 400 organ transplant procedures. Historically, our transplant program has performed living donation procedures for 55 years, and currently our transplant surgeons perform approximately 100 living donor transplants yearly. Importantly, we can also provide a unique perspective in that our physicians, who are also University of Cincinnati College of Medicine faculty, have authored over a dozen publications in the scientific literature that have focused on defining the types of ethical and medical protections that are unique for living organ donors.

Currently, living donor transplantation is the best treatment for patients with kidney failure as it provides them with a rapid means to avoid future dialysis treatments, and provides the longest time off of dialysis, as living donor kidneys last on average several years longer than do kidney transplants from deceased donors. In fact, over one third of living donor transplants performed in the US today are completed in patients before they have to start dialysis which offers additional survival advantages.

House Bill 399 would expand access to patients for needed organ donations by removing barriers for employers who want to do the right thing for their employees. It also allows the employees to not carry the financial hardship left by a leave of absence required for recovery after surgery. When a donor selflessly donates an organ, there is a recovery period required where the patient is unable to work. This paid leave helps the patient not have to worry about the financial stress from not working during the recovery period and making the living donor access more likely. This paid leave may encourage more potential living donors to consider organ donation, increasing the chances to save more lives.

House Bill 399 is a laudable step in the right direction for the state of Ohio that addresses protections that living organ donors need. Our living donors are making a selfless, courageous decisions and we must do everything we can to remove barriers to protect these heroes together and save more lives. UC Health strongly supports this bill. We also look forward to continuing to work with the Ohio Legislature on expanding protections for living organ donors in the future.

Sincerely,

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