

**Written Testimony
In Support of HB 2622
An Act to Establish an Organ Donor Registry and Public Awareness Fund**

January 29, 2019

Good afternoon Chair Greenlick and members of the House Healthcare Committee. My name is Chris Stoeger and I am the CEO at Lions VisionGift, the federally Regulated non-profit eye bank serving Oregon and SW Washington since 1975. I am testifying today in support of House Bill 2622, an Act to establish an Organ Donor Registry and Public Awareness Fund.

I'd like to tell you a little bit about why I am so passionate about this topic and why I believe we need to do more to educate Oregonians on organ, eye and tissue donation. Each day at Lions VisionGift we get the honor of helping guide many of Oregon's grieving families through what is often their most difficult hours. While over 2.4 million Oregonians have made the decision to register as organ, eye and tissue donors for transplant; each day at Lions VisionGift we experience the reality that shows those individuals rarely communicate that decision to their family members. The importance of public education on the topic of organ, eye and tissue donation as a means of easing this burden on grieving Oregonians cannot be overstated.

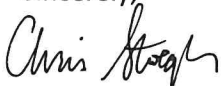
Donate Life Northwest, along with their member programs and hundreds of volunteers, have worked tirelessly on educating Oregonians since 1975, but still there is a large and growing gap between organ, eye and tissue availability and need. Nationally, there are over 113,000 people waiting for life-saving organ transplants. It is estimated that worldwide there are 12.7 million people blind from transplant-curable corneal disease, and millions more suffer from the need for skin, bone, connective tissue and heart valve transplants.

Revenue earned from this voluntary check box would be used to significantly expand Donate Life Northwest's ability to reach and educate Oregonians about anatomical donation and the opportunity they have to save and enhance another's life by joining the registry. Additional revenue would allow Donate Life Northwest to expand its student and community education programs, advertising and awareness efforts, and other campaigns needed to further their vision of ensuring that all Oregonians who need a transplant, receive one, and all those willing to donate to another are given the opportunity.

Many states, including Washington, California, Idaho, Montana, and Utah have successfully passed similar legislation, providing much needed revenue for public education for donation and transplantation awareness efforts in their respective states.

I urge you to vote to pass HB 2622. Passage will empower our fellow Oregonians to make a significant difference in the lives of those waiting for transplants as well as their families. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Chris Stoeger
Chief Executive Officer
Lions VisionGift