



Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care,

Since Oregon adopted the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, four organizations have worked to develop a strong collaborative with a reputation of integrity and trust with the people of Oregon. Donate Life Northwest, Pacific Northwest Transplant Bank, Lions VisionGift, and Community Tissue Services play a vital role in making donation possible through the donor registry and carefully orchestrated processes that honor the difficult decisions involved in donation.

Our partnership works tirelessly to save and enhance the lives of thousands of Oregonians and to maintain high quality and accountable programs. Outreach and education efforts continue to expand public awareness about the need for donation. We have worked together to educate the public about organ, eye, and tissue donation and gain the public's trust in the process of donation. This is evident in the over 2.5 million Oregonians who are currently registered as donors. However there are still over 850 patients currently waiting for life saving transplants in Oregon.

If Senate Bill 144 is enacted, it would alter the current process and change what individuals have already consented to donate through the Oregon Registry. Current authorizations allow only the donation of organs, eyes and tissue but not for whole body donation. By redefining "procurement organizations" to include "whole body donation organizations", this bill grants whole body, non-transplant organizations access to registration systems currently limited to organ, eye and tissue donation for transplant. If these changes were enacted, it would cause confusion and diminish the public trust that we have worked so hard to build.

We have serious concerns about the proposed bill and its impact on current registered donors as well as those waiting for organs. There are also significant issues about transparency, oversight and accountability of the additional body donation organizations that could be allowed access to the registry under this bill. We strongly recommended this bill be rejected as presented.

Organ donation carries strong responsibilities for honest, ethical and transparent accountabilities. Development of organ donation regulation and processes has taken over 40 years with careful effort and consistent public and professional input. In Oregon and nationally, substantial effort has been made to identify and address public mistrust of donor identification, "gifting" of donor organs and the processes of transplantation. Trust has been gained through specific and consistent outreach with the public as evidenced by Oregon's high donor registration rate.

Furthermore, donor information is stored in a secure database, accessible only to authorized organ, eye and tissue recovery personnel. The law prohibits donor registry information from being shared with any company or government agency. Redefining the meaning of "procurement organizations" would violate the trust that we have worked to instill in the public... people who have entrusted their personal identifying information to us and the organ, eye and tissue procurement organizations. This bill replaces the current system that operates with no known challenges with one in which numerous groups could have the ability to access and use information entrusted to the registry to potentially fulfill their commercial interests.

The impact SB 144 would have, if passed:

- **Dismantle the Current Life-Saving Registry:** Oregonians who have consented to donation through the current registry system have not consented to whole body donation. To meet the high ethical obligation of organ, eye, and tissue donation, Oregon would need to wipe the current system which consists of more than 2.5 million Oregonians, and re-register current anatomical donors to the new system if SB 144 was implemented.
- **Compensation for Donation:** The redefinition of procurement organizations to include body donation organizations would give for-profit companies the ability to approach donor families and offer compensation, in the form of free cremation, for a donation which goes against the definition of a gift – “a voluntary... and uncompensated transfer.”
- **Confusing to Oregonians Who Wish to Donate:** Organ, eye and tissue donation for transplant and body donation for research are two separate considerations for Oregonians and require two different consent options. Combining the two is confusing to Oregonians as they consider making the ultimate gift.
- **Potential to Reduce the Availability of Life-Saving Organs:** If Oregonians are confused about donating organs and whole bodies, this could make them less likely to donate at all, reducing the number of organs and tissues available for transplant. Additionally, non-transplant body donation organizations can offer services that non-profit transplant programs, by law, can't, such as free cremation. This could lead to families choosing body donation instead of life saving organ and tissue donation.
- **Violation of the Public's Trust:** Donor Information in the registry is stored in a secure database, accessible only to authorized organ, eye and tissue recovery personnel. The law prohibits donor registry information from being shared with any company or government agency. Redefining the meaning of procurement organizations to include non-transplant body donation organizations would violate the trust that has been built with the public since the inception of the donor registry.
- **Oregon as an Outlier:** The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA) unifies state registries throughout the nation. By changing the Oregon UAGA to include whole body donation the Oregon registry will be unlike any other state's registry. This would complicate the donation process in terms of the allocation of organs, eyes, and tissue.

We urge the Senate Committee on Health Care to stand with our community to continue to save and enhance lives through the donation and transplant of organ, eye, and tissue donation and reject SB 144. This bill will cause confusion for those Oregonians who are currently registered as donors throughout the state, and will ultimately cause more lives to be lost due to the availability of fewer transplantable organs, eyes and tissues.

Opposing Organizations:

Donate Life Northwest

Familias En Acción

Pacific Northwest Transplant Bank

Sierra Donor Services

Lions VisionGift

Intermountain Donor Services

Community Tissue Services

Tom Robinson and Susan Dieter-Robinson

Oregon Health and Sciences University

LifeCenter Northwest

American Kidney Fund

BloodWorks Northwest

Chronic Disease Coalition