

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

My name is Dotty Pantle. I am testifying today to offer my support to Donate Life Northwest in opposing SB 144.

You might wonder what relevant information this 70-year-old woman could possibly have that could have any bearing on this bill before us. I would say to you that I am here to share my story in the hopes that you will see how it is relevant to each of you, should the day come that your loved one may have need of a transplant.

May 21, 2007 was a beautiful spring day in the Willamette Valley. A perfect day to get out and enjoy an ATV ride. My 35-year-old son, Paul, found great joy in his off-road experiences with family and friends. He wore all the safety equipment and made sure all his companions did the same. Unfortunately, fate was not kind, and a terrible accident occurred which resulted in Paul having to be airlifted to Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene.

Surrounded by family and friends, we learned the news no one wants to hear. He was pronounced brain dead. The following day, Paul became an organ donor. He had made his wishes known to his wife and family that should he ever die, he wanted to be an organ and tissue donor in order to save lives. I honestly can't say that if presented with an option that included whole body donation, that he would have made the same choice. If SB 144 had been enacted before he passed away, I don't know if he or we would have donated.

He wanted to make a difference in life and also in death. His gift of life saved four people and gave two people sight. As a therapy for my grief, I wrote two letters to his recipients so they would have some idea of who he was and encourage them to live life to the fullest because of his gifts. I received three letters back telling me of their lives before and after Paul's donor gift. (And as a side note, one of his kidneys was a perfect match – as if it were from the recipient's identical twin.)

My son's legacy will forever be as a hero-dad to his five children, who are all now adults; as of September of this year he will have 3 grandchildren. You can be assured these babies will grow up hearing all about their remarkable, lifesaving grandfather. He lives on through his recipients, and that is something we will be forever proud of. It brings me peace to know that part of him is still with us.

At some point in your life, one of your loved ones may need a life-saving transplant. I hope you can make the right choice and will remember the relevant story from me and my son.