

Dear Transportation Committee Chair and Members,

My name is Jarod Doerner, I am a 19 years-old. I am writing you this letter to ask for your support of HB 2506 (establishing an Organ Donor Registry and Public Awareness Fund). Six years ago, I was suddenly hit with an illness that nearly killed me. I required a heart transplant to save my life. Some very amazing doctors saved me. I am using my second chance at life to pay-it-forward. Since my heart transplant; I have become an Eagle Scout, I have been a Den Leader to Cub Scouts, I am an active camp counselor at Merry Heart Camp (for sick children), I have become an Adult Leader in my Scout Troop, and I volunteer to promote Organ Donation at every opportunity. I am currently a student at Lane Community College, and I hope to one day be seating next to you as a Representative of my state.

I want everyone to become a donor. I feel that it is a personal choice that requires thought and education. Allowing residents contribute to organ donor education programs in our state would have the effect of expanding the awareness about the great need for organ donors in Oregon. One organ/tissue donor can help more nearly 100 people with live saving organ transplants, give them the gift of sight, or improve their quality of life with skin and tissue grafts. Every 10 minutes, a new name is added the organ transplant waiting list. The waiting list far exceeds the donor list – we need more donors. By expanding education, we will expand the number of donors. When I went to get my driver's permit I was asked if I wanted to sign up to become an "anatomical" donor. I didn't even know what that word meant. The lady at the DMV then explained it to me. I had not heard of that term before, and I had already had my transplant. I answered a lot of questions in my health class regarding my transplant and what it meant to me, and my life. Very few of my classmates, and some of my teachers, understood what an organ transplant entails. When 15/16-year-olds go to get their driving permits they are asked if they want to be a donor, but we don't get much information about it, unless we do the research beforehand. I feel that we need to expand organ donation education to be part of the high school curriculum. Donate Life NW, and other organizations, are doing a great job of educating the public on what it means to be an organ donor, but more needs to be done.

A complete stranger gave me the gift of life. Their choice to become an organ donor saved my life (and five other critical patients). I am grateful to my donor and their family, and by expanding education, I hope that many more lives can be saved, like mine.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jarod Doerner
Eugene, Oregon