

House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

May 12, 2014

Public Hearing HB 30-Donate Life PA

Dear Chairman Cutler, Chairman White and members of the Committee:

I have experience as both a recipient and donor and it's because of these experiences that I fully appreciate the incredible gift of organ and tissue donation.

I am able to see today because of a corneal transplant I received in 1987.

And it's because I am both a cornea recipient and donor family member that I wholeheartedly believe in organ and tissue donation and am doing everything I can to help pass House Bill 30/Senate Bill 850 – the Donate Life PA Act.

It's every parent's worst nightmare to lose a child. Five years later the pain is still fresh, the wounds still raw. But out of a horrible car accident that took the life of my 17-year-old daughter came something good, or at least something comforting to my wife and me: We donated Melissa's tissue, skin, bone, corneas and heart valve so in her tragic and untimely death, she gave life - or a better quality of life - to more than 25 people.

As a retired state trooper – and past president of the PA State Troopers Association – it angers and frustrates me that misleading information being circulated has an opportunity to stall passage of this bill.

What could be more important than saving lives?

House Bill 30 will neither impede a death investigation nor the ability for coroners to do their jobs. I would never support *any* cause or legislation that would jeopardize a death investigation - we owe that to the victim and family members.

I've read the bill and it does *nothing* to hamper a coroner's duty to investigate and support prosecution of any suspicious death. It does not interfere with the pursuit of justice. House Bill 30 isn't about politics – it's about saving lives.

Organ donation does **not** interfere with a forensic investigation.

Organ procurement organizations do **not** go to crime scenes.

Organ donation - and the discussion about it – takes place in the hospital with caring and compassionate representatives from OPOs and hospital social workers.

In all my years as a state trooper, I've never witnessed any recovery of organs – or the request for recovery of organs – that got in the way of a death investigation. The coroners' argument holds no water.

I will miss my daughter forever, but I am honored a part of her lives on, and that her last act was to help so many others.

Perhaps a burn patient or soldier home from Afghanistan is having a better quality of life today because of Melissa's tissue. Out of all the horror involved in my daughter's death my wife and I were able to find some comfort and good.

Help us save even more lives through passage of House Bill 30/Senate Bill 850 – the Donate Life PA Act.

Bruce A. Edwards,
Retired State Trooper & Past President, Pennsylvania State Troopers Association
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