

Mr. Tim Heely
21652 Joe Hazel Road
Leonardtown, MD 20650

**SB 574 Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Fund
Annual Funding and Extension
FAVORABLE**

Hon. Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

Good afternoon. I am Tim Heely – I am a resident of St. Mary’s County, a retired Navy Rear Admiral, a board member of Donate Life Maryland, a father of three children and a grandfather of three - and a recipient of a heart transplant in 2013.

After graduating from the Naval Academy I spent 33 years in the Navy flying jet fighters from aircraft carriers based in California and Japan, with my final ten years in the Navy being stationed at Naval Air Station Patuxent River Maryland.

When I retired in 2008 I was contemplating where my wife, Cherie and I would live. I was informed by Cherie, a Talbot County native, that I should stop worrying about it – we were going to live in Maryland.

And she was right.

Life was good, I had a nice job in Rosslyn, Virginia to which I commuted daily.

Then, in 2011, I started experiencing shortness of breath and a lack of stamina. Being a fighter pilot, the doctor was the last person I wanted to see – but Cherie drove me to the hospital, I was diagnosed as having had a heart attack, and treated with a couple stents and then eventually an artificial heart, or Left Ventricular Assist Device, which kept me alive for two years until I was able to get a heart transplant.

I was lucky – I was healthy enough that I was able to function near 100% while awaiting my heart, and so I was not deemed a priority for the few available hearts. But after two years, my luck began to run out and the Device began to shred my blood cells and it was my turn for the next available heart.

Since then I have run several companies, serve on a half dozen boards, have given away our daughter in marriage and welcomed a daughter-in-law to the family and have met my three grandchildren. This summer my wife and I will celebrate our 45th anniversary.

I have listed myself as an organ donor since it first became possible to do so on my driver’s license. Today in Maryland about 50% of people getting their driver’s licenses do the same thing.

Mr. Tim Heely
21652 Joe Hazel Road
Leonardtown, MD 20650

But that is not enough to provide the organs and tissue to meet the demand. Medical advances have greatly increased the life expectancy of recipients like me – but it is the availability of the organs and tissue that are lagging.

I firmly believe that by educating the public about the life changing difference that they can make by becoming a donor will greatly reduce the wait time for the ailing person.

This bill will go a long way in providing the funds to carry out this education process and will allow so many others the opportunities and second life that I have been given.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tim Heely