

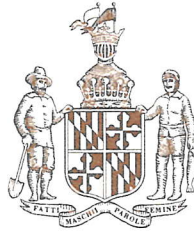
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MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair

Education, Business and
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 577 – Maryland Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act – Donors –
Registration by Tax Return Checkoff**

February 7, 2024

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

In 2007 Maryland established a contract between the Secretary of Health and a qualified nonprofit who was tasked with establishing, maintaining, and operating the Maryland donor registry. The legislation at that time also cleared the way for the Motor Vehicle Administration collect and transfer to the donor registry all relevant information regarding a donor making, amending, or revoking their anatomical gift.

This system has been a very effective way for Marylanders to help others by registering to be a donor, and there are currently over 2.2 million residents who have registered to be donors. Prior to the implementation of Real ID in 2016, Marylanders would renew their driver's license every two years, and the question of whether they wanted to be a donor was before them every two years. Now that the time interval for renewals has moved to every eight years, the donor designation question is not as frequent on people's minds and, consequently, places the over 2,200 Marylanders currently on the transplant waitlist at a much greater risk for not receiving a life-saving transplant.

Providing additional opportunities for individuals to indicate their wish to be a donor helps ensure that those Marylanders in need of a transplant will have a better chance at receiving the gift of life. Senate Bill 577 would enable an individual to designate a willingness to be an organ donor on their annual state income tax return. It would require the state individual income tax return to contain a space for a taxpayer to indicate if they are willing to participate in the Maryland Donor Registry.

Organ and tissue donation can save or drastically improve a life. Passage of this legislation will increase the number of people willing to take this opportunity to help others, and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 577.