



Testimony – Donate Life Maryland

In Support of House Bill 1050

State Department of Education – Organ Donation – Development of Educational Materials

Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Chair
Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1050 on behalf of Donate Life Maryland.

Donate Life Maryland is the non-profit entity responsible for managing the state's donor registry, and works every day with families, healthcare professionals, educators, and community partners to increase awareness and understanding of organ, eye, and tissue donation. Our work connects us with students, families, healthcare professionals, educators, and community leaders across Maryland who are directly impacted by donation and transplantation every day.

HB1050 represents a thoughtful, collaborative approach to ensure that when Maryland students learn about organ, eye and tissue donation, they receive information that is accurate, age-appropriate, and grounded in medical expertise.

This bill requires the State Department of Education to consult with the nonprofit entity that operates the donor registry and with the federally designated procurement organization for Maryland when developing or updating educational materials related to organ donation. This legislation helps ensure students receive information that is evidence-based, medically accurate, and consistent with Maryland law.

Importantly, HB1050 does not mandate curriculum or direct educators on what to teach. Rather, it supports the Department and local school systems by connecting them with subject-matter experts to ensure the information available to students is responsible, current, and appropriate for the classroom.

Education plays a critical role in shaping informed decision-making. Many young people encounter the opportunity to register as organ donors when they obtain a driver's license, yet too often they have not received clear, factual education about what donation means, how it works, or the lives it saves. HB1050 directly benefits Maryland students in several meaningful ways:

First, it ensures access to accurate, trustworthy information.

Students deserve medically sound, evidence-based education. By connecting the Department of Education with experts in donation and transplantation, this bill helps prevent misinformation and ensures that students receive factual, developmentally appropriate instruction.



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Second, it prepares students for real-life decisions.

For many young people, the first time they encounter organ donation is at the Motor Vehicle Administration when obtaining a driver's license. Too often, that decision is made without a foundational understanding of what donation is or how it works. Early education empowers students to make informed, confident choices when that moment arrives.

Third, it strengthens health literacy and scientific understanding.

Organ donation education reinforces lessons in biology, ethics, and public health. Students gain a clearer understanding of how organ systems function, how transplantation saves lives, and how healthcare systems protect donors and recipients. This supports critical thinking and real-world application of classroom learning.

Fourth, it encourages family engagement and respectful conversation.

Students frequently bring health education topics home. Accurate instruction helps spark informed discussions within families, reduces fear or misconceptions, and supports shared decision-making grounded in facts rather than myths.

Fifth, it promotes empathy, compassion, and civic responsibility.

Understanding organ donation allows students to see how one individual's decision can save multiple lives. It fosters awareness of community impact and encourages a sense of responsibility toward helping others.

Finally, it promotes consistency and equity across the state.

Without clear collaboration and expert input, access to accurate information may vary by district. HB1050 helps ensure that students statewide have equal access to reliable, high-quality educational materials.

Broader Public Health Impact

Across Maryland, thousands of residents are waiting for a life-saving transplant. For many, transplantation is their best—and sometimes only—chance at survival. Living donation continues to offer critical opportunities to reduce wait times and improve outcomes, yet public understanding remains limited. Education remains one of the most effective tools to increase awareness, reduce misconceptions, and build informed communities.

We also know that early education builds long-term civic engagement and health literacy. When students learn about organ donation in a thoughtful and medically accurate way, it fosters empathy, compassion, and a deeper understanding of how individual choices impact communities.



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Organ donation is a life-saving public health issue affecting thousands of Maryland families. Strengthening education in this area helps build awareness, compassion, and health literacy across communities while supporting consistent, medically accurate messaging statewide.

HB1050 reflects partnership — between education, healthcare, and public service —reflecting current medical practice, ethical standards, and Maryland law, while ensuring students receive high-quality information without placing new mandates on educators and enhances consistency statewide.

For Donate Life Maryland, this legislation is about saving lives, supporting families, and ensuring every student has access to accurate information that empowers informed decision-making.

Donate Life Maryland respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1050.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa M. Spicknall".

Lisa Spicknall
Executive Director
Donate Life Maryland



Saving and enhancing lives by registering organ, eye and tissue donors.

Donate Life Maryland (DLM) is the state-authorized nonprofit organization responsible for managing the Maryland Donor Registry.

Established in 2007 DLM works closely with the federally designated nonprofit organ procurement organization serving Maryland, Infinite Legacy (IL). Along with working closely with IL, DLM also has a strong partnership with the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration.

In addition to managing and operating the Maryland Donor Registry, DLM, in partnership with Infinite Legacy, helps educate the public about organ, eye and tissue donation and how to register as a donor in Maryland.

VISION

EVERY Marylander can make an educated decision about organ, eye and tissue donation and registering as a donor.

Quality Commitment

In collaboration with our OPO partner, we strive to further our mission of saving and enhancing lives by registering organ, eye and tissue donors.

**Registered over
2.8 Million Donors**

**Lobbied for numerous
lifesaving laws in Maryland**

**Provides outreach and education on the
importance of organ, eye, and tissue donation**

**Since
2009**

Over 2,100 Marylanders are currently waiting for a life-saving transplant.

www.donatelifemaryland.org



info@donatelifemaryland.org



THE NUMBERS

Donate LifeSM is the national symbol for the cause of organ, eye and tissue donation.

The Need is Great

More than **100,000** people are waiting for lifesaving organ transplants.



More than **48,000** organ transplants from 24,000 donors brought new life to patients and their families in 2024.

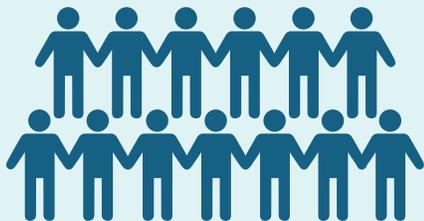


Every **8** minutes another person is added to the waiting list.

Did You Know?

60% of organ, eye and tissue donors are authorized by registries.

More than **78,000** corneal transplants helped to restore sight in 2023.



13 people die each day because the organs they need are not donated in time.



More than **2.5 million** tissue transplants heal lives each year.



More than **170 million** people are registered organ, eye and tissue donors. Thank you to all donors, donor families, registered donors and champions of the Donate Life cause!

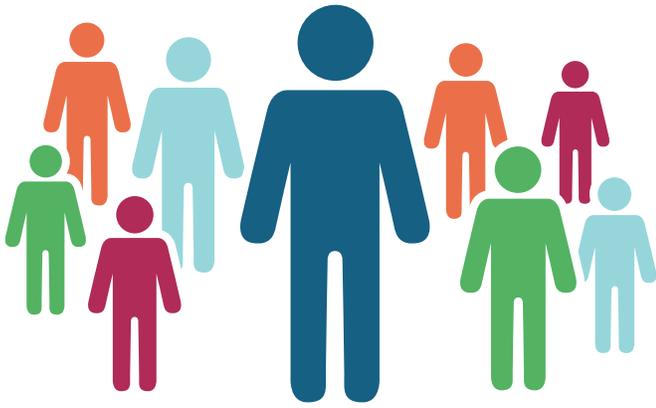
Pediatric Donation and Transplantation

More than **2,100** children under the age of 18 are on the national transplant waiting list.



More than **1,900** children were saved by the generosity of donors and donor families in 2024.

Deceased Donation



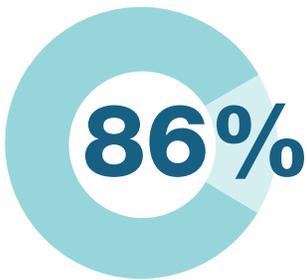
1 Organ, Eye and Tissue Donor

Saves up to
8
lives

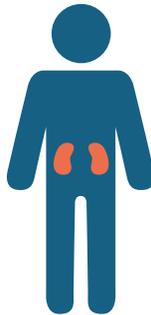
Restores sight to
2
people

Heals the lives of more than
75
people

Living Donation



of patients waiting are in need of a kidney.



Living donors can provide a kidney or a portion of their liver to a waiting patient.*

*Living donation is not included in your donor registration.

Did You Know?

The liver is the only organ that grows back! The donated part of the liver regrows in 4 months.

Learn more at [DonateLife.net](https://www.donatelife.net)



Top Frequently Asked Questions

Does registering as a donor change my patient care?

No, your life always comes first. Doctors work hard to save every patient's life, but sometimes there is a complete and irreversible loss of brain function. The patient is declared clinically and legally dead. Only then is donation an option.

Does donation affect funeral plans?

Funeral arrangements of your choice are possible, including a viewing. Through the entire donation process the body is treated with care and respect. Following donation, funeral arrangements can continue as planned.

Does my religion support organ, eye and tissue donation?

All major religions support donation as a final act of compassion and generosity.

Does my social and/or financial status play any part in whether or not I will receive an organ if I ever need one?

No. A national system matches available organs from the donor with people on the waiting list based on blood type, body size, how sick they are, donor distance, tissue type and time on the list. Race, gender, income, celebrity and social status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression does NOT prevent someone from registering as an organ donor.

What can I do to increase organ, eye and tissue donation?

1 Register your decision to be a donor at [Register.DonateLifeMaryland.org](https://www.donatelife.org).

2 Tell your family and friends about your decision to *Donate Life*.

3 Visit [DonateLife.net](https://www.donatelife.net) to discover ways you can be a champion of the cause.

4 Ask others to visit [DonateLifeMaryland.org](https://www.donatelife.org) to learn more and register.