

Hello Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Shani Kamberi, and I am a fourth-year medical student and rising pediatrician at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. I am here in strong support of this bill.

Over ten years ago, I was a high school student at Walter Johnson High School in Bethesda. At fifteen years old, sitting at the DMV getting my permit, I was asked whether I wanted to be an organ donor. I said no. Not because I opposed organ donation, but because I did not understand it. I had never been meaningfully taught what organ donation truly meant, not even in my Drivers Ed class. I had not discussed it with my family. I was asked to decide without having the knowledge to make it thoughtfully.

A year later, my English teacher, Mr. Bos, stood in front of our class and shared that he had received a heart transplant. I remember sitting there, stunned, realizing that someone I saw every day was alive because another family had said yes. That moment changed me. I went home, learned more, spoke with my family, and changed my designation to become an organ donor. But I was lucky. I had a teacher willing to share his story.

Because of that experience, as an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland, I drafted and wrote legislation that intended to incorporate organ donation education into Maryland's health curriculum. After two legislative sessions and a final out-of-session compromise in 2019, organ donation education became part of health classes statewide.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Bos passed away. His heart transplant had given him years he otherwise would not have had— years spent teaching, mentoring, and shaping students like me. Expanding and strengthening organ donation education is part of the legacy he left behind. It is how I honor him. HB1050 is the next responsible step.

We must ensure that the information on donation is accurate, consistent, and developed in consultation with the entities that operate Maryland's donor registry and procurement organizations. They are the experts who understand the science, the ethics, and the real-world logistics of donation and transplantation. Without their input, education risks becoming inconsistent, outdated, or incomplete.

Students across Maryland, regardless of teacher, school, or county, deserve standardized, evidence-based instruction before they are asked to make this decision at the DMV. This bill formalizes expert consultation. And it protects the integrity of what we teach our students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge a favorable report on HB1050.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shani Kamberi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shani" and last name "Kamberi" clearly distinguishable.

Shani Kamberi
University of Maryland School of Medicine, Class of 2026
9700 Holmhurst Rd
Bethesda, Maryland 20817