

March 10, 2026

Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Guzzone, Ranking Member Rosapepe and members of the Committee:

My name is Jon Hoffman and I'm the Senior Director of State Policy and Advocacy for the American Kidney Fund. On behalf of all the people we serve in Maryland, including the 18,084 residents currently living with End-Stage-Renal Disease (ESRD) I am testifying today to **respectfully request that you support HB 1410 and vote it favorably out of committee. This important bill would provide a tax credit for employers who provide paid leave for organ donation leave, covering 100% of the wages paid during the leave.**

The American Kidney Fund (AKF) works on behalf of the 1 in 7 Americans living with kidney disease, and the millions more at risk, to support people wherever they are in their fight against kidney disease — from prevention through post-transplant living.

Today in Maryland, there are thousands of people waiting for a kidney transplant. The wait for a kidney transplant from a deceased donor can last years, and 13 people die every day nationwide while waiting.

This is where living donors come in—they save lives with the altruistic act of donating a kidney, and we need to do everything we can to protect them and make more living donation possible. When someone donates a kidney to a relative, a friend or a stranger, they shorten the transplant waiting list for everyone else.

When a person decides they want to become a living organ donor, they go through an extensive screening and assessment process to determine their viability. They go through a battery of tests and the medical costs for the transplant are covered by the organ recipient's medical insurance. But non-medical costs incurred by the donor, including lost wages, transportation, accommodation, and childcare are all currently covered by the donor. At AKF, we hear from patients who believe they had a potential match for donation, who went through the process and were prepared to give of themselves, but when facing an economic or job-related barrier they couldn't overcome, they had to withdraw and the patient was back to square one.

By providing an incentive for a private business to provide their employees a paid leave benefit to donate an organ, this bill could expand the pool of donors who are financially able to go through with their intended organ donation and help save the life of a Marylander in need. This bill still provides an employer the choice on whether to participate and provides the employee with ample time to recover after surgery, with the bill providing up to 12 weeks of wage reimbursement. Many motivated donors cannot handle the financial consequences of a multiple

week period of leave without pay. This bill could be part of the solution to that problem. In a journal article in the Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology, Halpern, et al. showed that if a 10K disincentive is removed, there would be an estimated 61% increase in living donation.

We were very happy to see Maryland pass a Paid Family Medical Leave law, coming into effect this year and beginning payouts in 2027. This bill should be targeted to catch the people who would not be eligible for PFML for reasons of hours worked in the previous year or any other eligibility restriction that exists for employees under the law. By passing HB 1410, we can make it so no willing donor falls through the cracks and can be assured of paid leave while they recover from giving the gift of life.

This bill alone will not solve for the shortage of available organ donors for the large and growing waiting list. But as we work to improve the climate for living organ donation, AKF believes, and studies show, that removing financial burdens for living donors will lead to an increase in organ donations. For these reasons, **we are hopeful for your support of legislation that could help improve the lives of those fighting organ failure.**