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**Written Testimony
In Support of SB 751
An Act to Establish an Organ Donor Registry and Public Awareness Fund**

April 1, 2015

Good afternoon Chair Beyer and members of the Committee– I am Leslie Brock, Executive Director of Donate Life Northwest and I am here to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 751, an act to establish the Organ Donor Registry and Public Awareness Fund.

Donate Life Northwest has had a robust partnership with Oregon's DMV since 1975. 40 years ago, Donate Life NW, then the Oregon Donor Program, was formed from a collaboration among area organ and tissue procurement agencies. That same year, the Oregon Legislature passed a law allowing Oregonians to indicate their wishes to be a donor on their driver's license. That first year, 60,000 Oregonians added the "D" code to their driver's license. Now, 40 years later, the number of registered donors in the state has grown to almost 2.3 million. Over 98% of those registered through the DMV.

As the sole anatomical donation education agency in Oregon, Donate Life Northwest has an ethical responsibility to broadly and adequately educate the public about donation and transplantation so that all Oregonians have the knowledge needed to make an informed decision. We work on behalf of local organ, eye and tissue procurement organizations and transplant centers to grow the donor registry for the state, and ultimately save lives. We also work on behalf of thousands of people like those you will hear from today.

In 2014, Donate Life Northwest staff and volunteers participated in events and presentations reaching over 28,000 students, educators, healthcare professionals, and people in the general community. While we are proud of these accomplishments, our staff size and geographical reach is limited by a modest operating budget.

Despite the hard work of Donate Life NW, there is a large and growing gap between availability and need. As of this morning, there are 857 people on the waiting list in Oregon, with average wait times as long as 2 years. In Oregon in 2014, 36 people died waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant that never came. An additional 62 people were waiting long enough that they became too sick to be eligible for their transplant.

Revenue earned from this voluntary check box would be used to significantly expand Donate Life Northwest's ability to reach and educate Oregonians about anatomical donation and the option to join the donor registry. We've done a great job in the Portland metro area, but need to further reach rural and minority communities throughout Oregon. The need for donation and transplant touches all walks of life, regardless of race, gender or station in life.



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Additional revenue would allow Donate Life Northwest to expand its student and community education programs, advertising and awareness efforts, and other campaigns needed to further our vision of ensuring that all people in Oregon who need a transplant, receive one.

If we can save just one more life each year by expanding our reach to educate our community about the importance of becoming a donor, this bill would be well worth it.

36 states, including all of our border states, have successfully passed similar measures, generating significant dollars for donation and transplantation awareness efforts in their respective states.

I urge you to move SB 751 forward. Passage will empower our fellow Oregonians to make a big difference in the lives of those waiting for transplants as well as their families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Leslie Brock
Executive Director, Donate Life Northwest