

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

My name is Jan Yearwood Schumacher. I am a native Oregonian, born and raised in Eugene, now residing in Portland.

In 2000, I opened Oregon's largest bridal store in Portland. Tres Fabu Bridal encompassed over 7000 sq ft and employed a staff of 15 sales women, and 5 seamstresses. The store carried 45 bridal gown lines and participated in more than 1200 weddings annually.

I am the survivor of a major medical episodic event. In short, I probably shouldn't be alive today. While traveling abroad on a buying trip for Tres Fabu Bridal I came in contact with something my body did not recognize and was unable to fight. Upon debarking my 13 hour international flight home I was taken directly to the St. Vincent Hospital where the CDC became involved to determine my illness. The blood work up showed no bacteria or virus. Over the next two weeks my condition became critical. I was quarantined, as the CDC was unable to diagnose my illness. One night my body crashed. My small arteries completely let go and I started bleeding out internally - I was dying. I journeyed into the light. In a Hail Mary play my doctors administered a massive dose of steroids that made the blood coagulate but the damage was done. I would lose 40% of the tissue/skin on my body and suffered through multiple amputations.

It would be easy to say that without the doctors and nurses skill I would not have survived but the equation is larger than that. For without the "donated tissue" there quite simply would have been no options to save my life. My personal reconstruction began in July of 2008. I was admitted to the Oregon Burn Center at Legacy Emanuel Hospital where I spent the next 6 month of my life in one very small room. I endured 25 surgeries, one a week, some as long as 12 hours. In surgery they removed dead tissue and replaced and reapplied donated tissue in 3" wide strips 5 to 7 times to my arms, legs, and hands until I became well enough to self donate.

After the Boston Marathon bombing their local tissue bank had to send out a call nationwide for additional tissue in order to meet the needs of the victims that suffered amputations burns and wounds. Here in Portland Oregon my needs single handedly made Community tissue Services place that nationwide call.

I have just completed my 37th surgery of graft maintenance. I am alive and I remain grateful on a daily basis for the donors I have not met and will never be able to personally thank for the gift of life that they gave to me. My life has new purpose. I am imbued with a calling to educate and inspire by sharing my story.

I now volunteer tirelessly to a village of people, non profits and facilities that converged to save me. I am a peer to peer trained support counselor at Legacy Emanuel Hospital - The Oregon Burn Center. I am a counselor for the Amputee Coalition of American. Through Donate Life NW I speak to high school students about becoming donors and I BETA test partial robotic hands for the Federal Government.

While volunteering at the Oregon Burn Center I have witnessed the saving of lives with up to 90% tissue loss which not long ago was inconceivable. The increased survival rate is directly attributable in large part to the availability of donated tissue.

Donated tissue in the medical field is referred to as a “biological bandage”. It is sterilized, run through an allograft machine and frozen in 3 “ wide sections, it will never come to life on a recipients body. It is used to cover and seal the wound from bacteria and infections. There is no preferred solution. This tissue is applied and reapplied in surgery, in a sterile environment until the patient is well enough to become their own donor.

People think about donating kidneys, livers and hearts as donating organs. Skin is our largest organ. Skin/tissue is one’s first line of defense against foreign bacteria and infections entering the body. In 2014, Oregonians’ donated tissue resulted in 64,661 tissue transplants. Cornea donors brought sight to over 1,600 Long after other organs have failed or are no longer in good service, corneas and tissues remain extremely viable. (CORNEA STATS}

Medicine has come a long way but it is still referred to as “practicing” medicine. And while new technological advances are being made almost daily there are instances that only another human being can repair. We need to continue expanding our reach and educating our citizens of the importance of the gift of sight, life and mobility through donation. This opportunity to create a legacy will be realized through the passage of senate bill 751.

Sincerely,

Jan Yearwood Schumacher
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