

HB 4019: ORGAN, EYE & TISSUE DONOR APPRECIATION WEEK

Jarod Doerner's Story

My name is Jarod Doerner, and my Eagle Scout project is to promote organ donation awareness in the State of Oregon.

With the help of Representative Julie Fahey, I have requested a House Health Care committee bill to declare the second week of April each year to be "Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donor Appreciation Week" and direct the Governor to present a "Gifts of Life" award to selected families of organ, eye, and tissue donors.

In 2014, I was hit with a serious illness that attacked my heart, I needed a heart transplant. I spent over four months at the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University. I was one of the lucky few that was matched with an organ donor. It was there that I learned about the need for organ, eye, and tissue transplants in the US. Without them, people of all ages die waiting for donations, like I could have. Because of my personal connection to organ donation, I wanted to combine my Eagle Project and my helping to promote organ, eye, and tissue donor awareness into one thing that would mean a lot to everyone. In the future, I am interested in pursuing other improvements, like improving how DMV registers Oregonians as anatomical donors and having a more complete approach to educating high school students about the value and importance of being an organ donor.

By passing House Bill HB 4019, we will raise statewide awareness of the need for organ donations. My hope is that everyone in Oregon will become an organ donor and help fulfill the needs of everyone in need of a transplant.

Thank you.

*-Jarod R. Doerner
Eugene, Oregon*

Background

More than 117,000 people in the United States are in need of a lifesaving organ transplant, and, on average, another person is added to the waiting list every 10 minutes. Twenty-two Americans die each day while waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant. *A single organ, eye, or tissue donor can save and heal more than 75 individuals.*

Eight organs can potentially be donated (though it is rare that a death occurs under circumstances which make this possible): Heart, liver, small intestines, kidneys, lungs, and pancreas. It is much more likely, however, that deaths enable cornea or tissue (bone, skin, heart valves, and connective tissue) donations.

Public education about organ, eye and tissue donations is crucial because more than 800 people in Oregon await an organ transplant, and hundreds more await a tissue or cornea transplant.

Donors who register at the DMV will have a "D" or heart printed on their driver's license, permit, or ID. Their names are added to a secure and confidential statewide donor registry. Oregonians may also choose to register through Donate Life Northwest via their website or a paper form. Everyone at least 13 years of age is eligible to register.

Our Bill

Our bill has two parts: First, it establishes the second week of April each year as "Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donor Appreciation Week in Oregon. April is National Donate Life Month.

Second, it creates the "Gifts of Life" award, which will be presented annually by the Governor to families of organ donors from the preceding year.

