



January 30, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Health Care

From: Donate Life America

RE: Oppose SB 144

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Donate Life America (DLA), we write to you today to express our concern regarding Oregon SB 144. Donate Life America is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that leads its national partners and state-based teams to increase the number of donated organs, corneas and tissues available to save and heal lives. DLA manages the national brand for the cause of donation; motivates the public to register as organ, eye and tissue donors; provides education about living donation; develops and executes effective multi-media campaigns to promote donation; and manages the National Donate Life Registry at RegisterMe.org.

DLA's collaborative work with its state team partners, organ procurement organizations, transplant centers, donor hospitals, national partners and DMVs has resulted in registering more than 147 million American as organ, eye and tissue donors. In 2017, 49% of all recovered organ donors, 55% of all recovered tissue donors, and 56% of all recovered cornea donors were legally authorized through either a state registry or the National Donate Life Registry. DLA is writing to oppose SB 144 because we believe that the changes outlined in SB 144 will jeopardize this lifesaving work.

Oregon has one of the most successful state donor registries in the United States with over 79% of adults in the state having legally authorized organ, eye and tissue donation for the purpose of lifesaving and healing transplants. Over 2.5 million Oregonians have made the decision and taken the time to document this selfless gift.

If SB 144 is adopted, it would significantly harm the success of the Oregon donor registry, the public trust, and the number of lifesaving transplants. In their current donor registration, Oregonian registered donors have not authorized whole body donation. If this bill passes, Oregon would need to re-register 2.5 million of its citizens to a new system, and further, would need to deploy entirely new systems of notification and education regarding this change and action needed. This re-registration process, and inclusion of whole-body donation at the request of a for-profit entity, would greatly diminish public trust in and perception of the donation process and stewardship of the gift of life.

The bill would grant for-profit body donation companies access to the state registry for organ, eye, and tissue donation without purpose or concern for the public trust and health in mind. SB 144 has been proposed without any research or peer-review regarding the societal or healthcare impact to the state

of Oregon and its current system. The implication is that Oregon does not care for the health, or respect the legal decisions, of its citizens.

Whole body donation for research is distinct from organ, eye and tissue donation for transplantation. Organ donation is the lifesaving process that enables surgeons to transplant donated organs - hearts, livers, lungs, intestine and kidneys - to save the lives of individuals waiting for a second chance at life. Cornea and tissue donation are the lifesaving and healing processes that allow for recovery of tissues to restore health, mobility, and sight. Three federal agencies oversee and regulate organ, eye and tissue donation and transplantation, and prioritize the transparency of the data and process to the public.

Donor information in the Oregon registry is currently stored in a secure database, accessible only to authorized organ, eye, and tissue recovery personnel. Donor registry information access is restricted by law to appropriate recovery agency professionals for the purpose of determining registration status of a potential donor. Personal donor registry information cannot be used for marketing outreach or company/organization communication. Redefining the meaning of procurement organizations to include whole body donation organizations would break the trust with the Oregon public.

Donate Life America is supportive of organ, eye and tissue donation for scientific research and education when donation for lifesaving transplant is not possible. OPOs, eye banks and tissue banks across the nation work closely with organizations who need organs, corneas and tissues to further important research and education. This legislative revision to the Oregon Donor Registry will not help save and heal lives or further important scientific research. We oppose SB 144 because it will create confusion and break public trust, endanger the lifesaving mission of the Oregon Donor Registry, and result in potential conflicts with federal designations and regulation.

Please take the time to consider the impact this bill would have on the 2.5 million registered donors, and the 855 people currently waiting for a lifesaving transplant in Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. David Fleming". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

G. David Fleming  
President & CEO