

Senate Bill 384
Written Testimony: Mark Dybis
House Health Policy Committee
Thursday, September 28, 2023

Chair Rogers and members of the House Health Policy Committee:

My name is Mark Dybis and I am a citizen of the great state of Michigan. I grew up in Grand Rapids, was educated in Ann Arbor and Dearborn, lived in Detroit, now in Grosse Pointe Woods and work in Warren and I'd like to offer a quote from an economist I'm fond of that I think has some relevance here, "There are no solutions. Only trade-offs."

For someone in need of an organ the solution would be to simply grow a new one or perhaps someday a new organ could be manufactured. But, as of yet, those solutions do not exist so we are faced with the trade-off of an organ transplant from either a deceased or living donor.

In late 2019 I made the decision to become a living liver donor in order to extend the life of my brother-in-law Dave Galbenski. At one point during the odyssey of tests and interviews that qualify an individual to donate an organ I found myself in the quiet little office of a social worker whose job was to review the financial impact of my decision.

We spent the time together discussing horror stories of people who were faced with the trade-off of the life of a loved one or financial ruin. I began to feel as though I might be taking a walk on a wire without a safety net. Without protections for the donor, the impact of the loss of job, career, household income and insurance can be catastrophic and echo through many more lives than just the donor. I myself had to take into consideration the impact on my wife, two teenage children and mother; all of whom rely upon me.

God forbid the donor finds themselves in the minority of patients who develop a complication, short term or long. Complications like: abdominal adhesions, herniated incisions, blood clots, nerve damage, infection, pneumonia, the myriad of complications that can arise from the loss of the donor's gallbladder and even death. I'm just scratching the surface of a less than perfect outcome. In these cases, the donor could very well find themselves unemployed, unable to provide for dependents and without insurance to help cover the cost of mounting healthcare bills.

I have strived to live a simple life and from that perspective this is a simple issue. Our legislators cannot, at present, manufacture a solution that ends the need for organ transplants. Indeed, the need for transplant organs sadly continues to rise. The trade-off, however, is within your purview. This is something we can all hang our hats on for the brighter future of our state and its citizens present and future. I implore you, the members of the Michigan Legislature, support SB384.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mark Raymond Dybis
Michigander