

January 14, 2018

Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Senator Vicki Schmidt

Re: House Bill 2343 Organ Transplant Nondiscrimination Legislation

To whom it may concern,

If individuals with disabilities are asked to donate their organs by the state then why would the state discriminate against the same individuals and deny them an organ donation if they qualify for one.

I am the parent of a young woman named Rachel O'Brien. Rachel was born in October 1982 with Down's Syndrome. She was lucky to not have any medical issues at birth and she grew up to be an outstanding and very independent young lady.

In October 2014 we went in to update our ID's with the State. They asked if she wanted to be an organ donor. With a little explaining about organ donation, Rachel believed it was the right thing to do. Her Dad had received a heart transplant and her cousin had donated her organs upon her passing. Rachel believed everyone should be an organ donor.

On February 7, 2015 Rachel had a leg cramp when she got up in the morning but still wanted to go bowling with her friends. She collapsed at the bowling alley from a blood clot that went to her lungs, Pulmonary Embolism. Rachel died that morning and within a few hours I received the phone call from Midwest Transplant to begin the harvesting as soon as possible. It was the hardest phone call I have ever had to deal with.

Within a month of Rachel's passing I was informed that one of her corneas went to a man in the Midwest and I received a note from a recipient named Beth thanking me for Rachel's tissue donation. Beth can now play with her kids rather than watch them play. I'm not sure who else benefitted from Rachel's donation but it was a wonderful gift that she gave.

A person's disability should not be an issue as a donor or a recipient. People with disabilities are not second class citizens and should not be treated as such.

Sincerely,
Mary Cassidy
Rachel O'Brien's Mom