

In support of SB 190



Part of the mission of the National Kidney Foundation is to increase the availability of all organs for transplantation. Every week the NKF gets calls from clients who need financial and emotional support as they wait for their gift of life. Almost 600 people in Connecticut are waiting for kidney or liver transplants, a life-saving wish that could be attained if their donors did not have to suffer the hardship of missed wages, home expenses, pharmaceuticals costs and travel expenses. Meanwhile, in the United States, 16 people die each day waiting for their transplant because their generous living donor cannot afford this gift.

Sandie has been on dialysis for 17 years. She is now so ill she will have to leave her family in Plainville to go to Baltimore where she and her donor will undergo plasmapheresis in order for her body to accept the generous gift of an unmatched kidney. Unfortunately she can't afford the expenses of hotels, gas, babysitters and the time her donor will miss from work, so Sandie said "no thanks" to this generous donor. As the calcium and heart disease builds in her body as a result of her kidney failure and dialysis treatments, Sandie will not live much longer. Meanwhile, her greatest wish is to just once have a pizza and a beer on a Saturday night with her husband, something forbidden to a chronically ill kidney patient.

Five years ago Ted decided to donate his kidney to his 3 year old son. He spent months worrying that if something went wrong he would leave his wife alone to support his chronically ill child, but after a year of watching his son suffer on dialysis without a transplant, Ted decided to test his luck. He survived the transplant, his son was finally able to urinate, but Ted lost his job because of the time he took from his job to recuperate. A few months later Ted found another job, but after a few years the drugs his son took to suppress rejection of the kidney, the toddler's liver began failing. Now Ted must decide if he can risk supporting his family in order to donate a portion of his liver to his young son.

These are only two of the families who call the NKF each week to ask that we do something to help them live. Passage of SB 190 will be an incentive for many Connecticut residents who want to give the Gift of Life. In Wisconsin this bill has increased living donation by 25% in one year. If this bill passes, people like Ted will no longer wonder if he can afford to save his baby's life.

Kimberly Hathaway, CEO
National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut