



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

February 7, 2007

Dear Chairwoman Mary Ann Handley; Chairwoman Peggy Sayers and members of The Committee on Public Health,

I would like to offer the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 673, An Act concerning health insurance coverage for bone marrow testing, sponsored by the honorable Senate Handley of Glastonbury.

As a former State Representative in Massachusetts for the past six year, and now as Chief of Staff to the Lieutenant Governor, I have been actively involved in many legislative initiatives, yet few are as life changing as Senate Bill 673. This bill would mandate insurance coverage for bone marrow testing, a law that we currently have in Massachusetts.

My former legislative aide, John Gallivan and his wife Gina spent much of the past two years searching for a bone marrow match. At the age of 25 and less than one year into their marriage, John and Gina were faced with one of life's most daunting challenges. Gina was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). After receiving chemotherapy treatment at both Hartford Hospital and at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, it was determined that Gina would need a bone marrow transplant. Over the course of the next several weeks, I organized bone marrow drives for Gina in both Worcester and Boston. Between the two drives, nearly three hundred people were put in the International Bone Marrow Registry.

John also organized a bone marrow drive in Wethersfield, Connecticut yet the major difference was that people who wanted to be tested in Connecticut had to pay out their own pockets, unlike in Massachusetts, where insurance companies were mandated to cover the cost of testing.

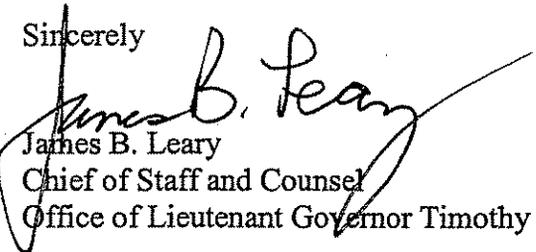
Connecticut is one of only two states in New England that have not passed this law, and I urge you to do so. I witnessed John, as he struggled with the financial hardships that come with serious medical conditions. The cost of prescriptions, transportation to Boston, and housing for members of his family were just a few of the hardships he faced. On top

of that, John had to worry about how he was going to pay for the bone marrow drive that he needed to have in the hopes that he would find a suitable match for his wife, Gina.

Adoption of this legislation would allow similarly affected Connecticut families to avoid that additional burden. Moreover it will help to increase the number of donors in the international registry, increasing the likelihood of finding matches for individuals afflicted with leukemia.

It is my hope that Connecticut will join Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Maine and pass this vital piece of legislation. I would be willing to speak with you if you have any questions at all.

Sincerely



James B. Leary
Chief of Staff and Counsel
Office of Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray