

**Written Testimony of
Dara L. Brooks (Smith)**

March 7, 2012

**In Support of House Bill No. 5333
Public Health Committee**

**Testimony in support of HB 5333,
An Act Concerning Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness**

Representative Ritter, Senator Gerratana, and members of the Public Health Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of House Bill # 5333.

My name is Dara Brooks and I am a volunteer with Donate Life in CT and a living donor for my son Tyler. I am writing in support of House Bill 5333. Please take the time to read why I became a volunteer with Donate Life and why this bill is important to me. My son Tyler Haywood Smith was born with a rare disease that required that he needed a liver transplant. This was almost 20 years ago. His chances of receiving a liver transplant were very slim because while he had an illness that would eventually end his life without a transplant. He was not sick enough to be in intensive care which meant he would not be very high on the transplant list. This is still something that happens today. We were afraid that he would not survive the wait. We decided that we needed to do something else so we decided to do a living related transplant at John Hopkins Hospital which is where we lived at the time. My son had complications and did not make it past three months after the surgery. Just imagine 2 weeks after his birth we were told that he needed a transplant and 19 months later after doing the living related transplant my son was pronounced dead. It was a very difficult time for all of us. Today 18 people die a day waiting for a transplant. Why? Most of it is because people are not aware of the importance of organ donation. Some are afraid because they have heard various myths such as if I become an organ donor Doctors will not work as hard on making sure I survive an accident. I have also heard that the church does not believe in it. This bill can help eliminate these types of myths. In some cases it can even help with the lost of a love one. I know this firsthand because Tyler heart lives on in a young woman and this is comforting to me. I hope this bill passes so that the current 40% of residents being donors goes much higher. Thank you for introducing this life-saving legislation

Thank you,
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