

**Written Testimony of
Tom & Joanne Kasprzak**

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**

Dear 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.

We are Tom and Joanne Kasprzak, donor family of our beloved daughter, Mary, who passed away at the tender age of 15 in 2003. We are also volunteers with Donate Life CT and the New England Organ Bank. We are writing in strong support of House Bill 5333. This legislation will save lives in addition to educating the residents of Connecticut of the importance of organ and tissue donation.

Our daughter, Mary, who was born with Down syndrome, overcame tremendous cultural and medical odds throughout her short life. Upon her passing, on September 8, 2003 at Yale -New Haven Hospital, Mary saved the lives of five others through organ donation. We now have an ongoing relationship with Kerry Keenan, who received the gift of Mary's heart nearly nine years ago. Kerry subsequently adopted two children. Joanne and I are Godparents to Francis, her son. Our true story is told in the book, "Plain Vanilla with Rainbow Sprinkles" and all the proceeds are donated to charity, including the Donate Life CT organization. I am also a motivational speaker, inspired by the lessons taught me by my daughter about leadership and overcoming adversity. More can be found at www.tompkasprzak.com Our website also includes the Donate Life link by clicking on the logo on the bottom right. People are educated as to how they too can become a hero by giving life to others.

As people who have literally heard another's voice say, **'thank you for your kindness and compassion in allowing Mary's organs to save my life,'** we are now pleading with you to pass this legislation that may one day stop the needless loss of other lives that can be saved through organ and tissue donation. This can only happen by educating more people about the facts. The Donate Life organization needs and deserves your support through this legislation.

We very much appreciate and thank you for introducing this legislation. We are unable to be there in person, but we are pleased to continue to tell our story in order that others may benefit.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Tom P. & Joanne M. Kasprzak
44 Mayfield Terrace
East Lyme, CT, 06333
860-691-1737
tomkaspr@hotmail.com
jerseygirl117@hotmail.com