

**Written Testimony of
Valerie Maze Keeney**

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**

To 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 husband's life was saved in 2010 at Yale-New Haven Hospital when he underwent liver transplantation after months and months of hospitalizations and courageously hanging on to life waiting for a donor organ.

My husband received the gift of life in June 2010 thanks to an organ donor in Maine and the extraordinary efforts and skills of the superb doctors at the Yale-New New Haven Hospital including Dr. Sukru Emre, Dr. Schilsky, and Dr. Taddei, and many other wonderful doctors, nurses and health care workers at the Transplant Unit at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

My husband and I are proud supporters of Donate Life Connecticut. Together last April we participated in raising the "Donate Life" flag together in our town. A year earlier, though, we faced a starkly different situation. It is impossible to convey the nature of the harrowing day-to-day ordeal involved in waiting for a donor organ or tissue for a loved one. How painful it is even to recall my husband's deteriorating health, the months of serial hospitalizations, and waiting, waiting, waiting --even in the Intensive Care Unit--for an organ transplant.

My husband and I know we are very, very fortunate. For far too many patients on the transplant lists, however, time tragically runs out. We must help patients and their families in Connecticut who desperately need organ or tissue transplantation. Concerted efforts to increase donor registration in Connecticut is vital. HB 5333 is a critical step designed to accomplish this. With this legislation, effective means to increase donor registration in Connecticut will be discovered. In addition, important educational efforts can increase. When most Americans understand the miraculous nature of transplantation medicine and the gift of life they have the power to give, they will want to register in ever increasing numbers. They will feel wonderful about being part of that miracle. That can happen and will happen in Connecticut with passage of this Bill.

My husband is a living miracle enjoying a full, normal life thanks to organ donation. Please pass HB5333 to help make the same miracle happen for other patients and future patients and their loved ones in Connecticut.

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