

**Written Testimony of
Roy E. Graham**

March 4, 2015

**Testimony in support of HB6281
An Act Concerning Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness
Public Health Committee**

Representative Ritter, Senator Gerratana, and members of the Public Health Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony in **very strong support** of House Bill #6281. An Act Concerning Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness.

My name is Roy Graham and I am addressing this committee as a member of The Board of Directors of Donate Life CT, in support of HB6281. More importantly though I am a husband and father of four fantastic children, as well as a Kidney Transplant recipient. I was diagnosed with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) in December of 2011. It was a shocking revelation to myself and my family, and the realization of death was never as close to me as it was that day. My grandmother died of kidney failure 40 years ago. Not much was talked about back then regarding organ donation or transplants. so that was all that I really knew about the disease. As stated I have a family, so I knew that if anything, I had to find a way to fight.

I was put on dialysis in March of 2012, and during that same month is when I was introduced to the Donate Life CT (DLC) organization. This is when my life, and my family's life changed forever. Through their compassion and the awareness that they brought to the importance of organ and tissue donation, my wife and I have been dedicated to the cause ever since. In fact through our commitment to DLC my wife has become an advocate that promotes awareness through several DMV offices, and I have done various awareness events, and speaking engagements to help promote organ and tissue donation and registration. I have since been elected to the Board of Directors for DLC.

This cause is also very very personal to me as well. I am very lucky and blessed to be able to be here, and enjoy the lives of my family and friends. Through the love and generosity of my brother-in-law, I received a kidney from him in November of 2013. I was given a second opportunity to tell the people closest to me I love them, that I might have missed before. And I also have a chance to mend some bridges and say I'm sorry, for things that I have done to hurt certain people. I now have a chance to watch my four year old daughter enter her first day of kindergarten this September. I get a chance to see my 14 year old perform the lead role in Shrek, as Fiona this May. I now have a chance to see my 19 year old son, who is a sophomore at UCONN in the Engineering Program graduate college. As well as being able to walk my 22 year old daughter down the aisle, when the time comes for her to be married. But lastly, I would not have had the chance to celebrate my five year wedding anniversary in September 2014 with my lovely wife.

As the statistics will show, there are over 121,000 people on the list waiting for an organ donation. Of those 21 people will die per day, waiting for an organ. That is up from the 2012 numbers of 113,000 people waiting, and 18 people per day respectively. That is a big increase from 2012, when we believe we should be heading in a downward trend, not upward. What I am trying to say that there are going to be 21 people today as we speak that are going to miss out on a graduation, a wedding anniversary, walking their daughter down the aisle, the first day of school, and so on. We are very far removed from when my grandmother died from kidney disease 40 years ago. Please help us to end this upward trend, and send people home to their families by supporting this bill to increase organ donation registration and awareness. This Donation Fund would help enormously in reaching that goal. Thank you for your time...

With respect and warm regards,

Roy E. Graham
Kidney Transplant Recipient
Board of Directors Donate Life CT
Meriden resident
203-671-7629
royegraham@gmail.com