Written Testimony of Jeffrey V Rabuffo, M.D., FA CS.
February 19, 2015

Re: HB 5928
An Act Concerning The Issuance Of *Men's Health Commemorative License Plates.*

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My name is Dr. Jeffrey V. Rabuffo, M.D. As a urologist for more than 50 years, I have seen too many men die from prostate cancer for lack of awareness: a disease that didn't have to cost a man his life; a disease that didn't have to be a death sentence if only it had been caught earlier.

Let me tell you about Richard. When I first met Richard, he was in his late 50s. He went to see his family doctor who told him he was okay even though he had an elevated Prostate Specific Antigen or PSA test. This blood test looks for elevated levels of a certain chemical made by the prostate when there are potential problems. It's the equivalent of a woman finding a lump in her breast.

By the time I met Richard, he had an aggressive form of prostate cancer. Through surgery and other treatments, Richard was one of the lucky ones but if he had waited any longer, he wouldn't have lived to be a grandfather or take his dream trip to New Zealand.

The only reason why Richard came to see me is because I heard him casually talking about his elevated PSA as it if was no big deal. I told him he needed to come in and see me right away. I am so glad he did.

For whatever reason, there is a lot of misinformation out there about prostate cancer. Men think prostate cancer is a disease you can live with and simply die from something else.

That simply is not true.

The reason why is men are not getting the education and support about issues affecting them like women are, for example, about breast cancer. Women have done a remarkable job of bringing awareness to breast cancer over the last 20 years and I applaud them for waging a war on a disease where early detection can mean the difference between life and death.

It's time we do the same for men.

This is why I strongly urge you to support **House Bill 5928, An Act Concerning The Issuance Of *Men's Health Commemorative License Plates.*** We are not saying this is the complete answer to fighting prostate cancer and other diseases that have an impact on men's health but it's a real tangible start in alerting and educating men about their own health.

Imagine wives, mothers, daughters, sons, husbands, fathers and grandparents driving around Connecticut's bucolic country roads, or busy city streets with a license plate marker bringing attention to men's health and prostate cancer. People will see it and start asking questions. The blue-tie will become symbolic in the fight against prostate cancer become much like the pink ribbon is for breast cancer.

Revenues from the Men's Health License plate would go to help other health issues facing men that aren't getting a lot of attention, like domestic violence against men, child abuse against boys, blood pressure, diabetes and the need for exercise.

Two years ago, I retired from private practice and Middlesex Hospital to start my own nonprofit organization, the New England Men's Health Initiative. This is a 501/c3 based in Middletown. Revenues from the plate would help bring awareness to the issues mentioned above through the 501/c3.

I urge members of The Connecticut General Assembly to pass **House Bill 5928**. Let's put men's health in the driver's seat where it belongs. Connecticut would be the first in the nation to have its own license plate dedicated to men's health. My hope is that others would follow our lead, and more people like Richard would know the risks early on and seek medical help right away.

Richard knows that if I had not heard him talking that day, he probably wouldn't have lived to see his first grandchild being born or taken that trip to New Zealand.

Men's health has an impact on everyone: not just men but their partners, their children, and their hopes and dreams.

It's time to make sure no more stories like Richard ever happen again. Thank-you for your time and willingness to take up this issue. We will save men's lives because of it.

I may be retired but my work is hardly done.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffery Rabuffo