

she, hopefully, with all the work that she's doing,  
will never have to go through what I'm going through."

Barbara Lazarus, on her daughter, Jaime



**JAIME LAZARUS**, with her mother, Barbara Lazarus, is planning her second fundraiser for research into polycystic kidney disease Saturday in Hubbard Park in Meriden. Jaime planned last year's walk after learning her mother has the disease. Jaime has since been diagnosed with it.

## INSPIRED BY MOM

Madam Chairwoman, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Jaime Roy of Milford, and I am both humbled and hopeful in sharing my strong sentiments as a proponent of Proposed Bill 6281, an act concerning organ and tissue donation awareness.

To know my story, you must first know my mothers. My mother was a model Connecticut resident. She dedicated her life to breaking through the glass ceiling set above her. She was steadfast as she worked her way through school, juggling multiple jobs to make due, and being an admirable role model as a single parent. She even managed to open her own small business as she simultaneously saved enough money to move us to the town of Cheshire so that I could go to a school that would provide greater educational opportunities. By merely looking at my mother, you would never know that this inspirational woman was also battling a hereditary degenerative disease that was slowly killing her kidneys.

In May 2008, during my freshman year at Quinnipiac University, the reality of my mother's condition became far to real, she was going into kidney failure. We spent Mother's Day weekend lying in a hospital bed together after she had emergency placement of a catheter and her first dialysis treatment.

Quite honestly, I never thought it would get to that point, my mom was a super hero in my eyes, the thought of her needing to be hooked up to a machine to stay alive was unfathomable to me. I was scared, but my mom was brave. My mother courageously transitioned her life to accommodate going to dialysis three days a week, three hours each time. She quickly became the dialysis center "favorite" learning everybody's name and story, sharing laughs and becoming a confidant to other patients struggling with the life-altering changes of dialysis.

Every 10 minutes one more person is added to the transplant waiting list, and my mother became one of them; as she also promptly followed every guideline, appointment and procedure needed to pursue a kidney transplant.

While my mom was incredibly strong, she had her moments of weakness. Dialysis is a life sustaining treatment, but that does not imply a quality of life. She was weak, frail and sick and tired of being sick and tired. On February 28, 2012, she called me on her way home from dialysis. She wasn't feeling well and had to pull over. I offered to come and pick her up, but she assured me that she was just around the corner from home. I pushed back, but she was the boss and let me know she'd be home shortly. She said Jaime, I love you, and I replied, I love you too mom.

It wasn't until several hours later that two police officers arrived at my work. Barely able to get the words out, they told me that moments after my mother got off the phone with me and back on the road, she experienced a medical emergency while driving and pressed the accelerator instead of the breaks. She drove right through an intersection and crashed her car into a tree. She passed away on impact, and I never saw or spoke to my mom again.

Rather than seeing her only daughter grow into the woman that she alone raised, my mother instead joined a new class of statistics; being 1 of the 19 Americans who dies every day, waiting for a life saving transplant.

It was three months later during April, which is National Donate Life Awareness Month that I reached out to Kari Mull of Donate Life CT and asked how I could help. Since then my mission has been clear. Spread awareness of the organ and tissue donation registry, educate people young and old alike, and encourage the family, school, political and medical community conversation that could mean the difference between life and death for a person waiting for a transplant.

Your decision to support this bill could mean the same for the many Connecticut residents who are now, or will one day find themselves on the transplant waiting list. It may be too late for my mom to be saved, but she lives on in me and I am determined to have her story heard. And before I leave you today, I would like to share one last thing with you.

I too have the same kidney disease that ultimately took my mother's life, but I vow to each and every one of you in this room that if the time comes when I end up on that list, I refuse to let history repeat itself. I refuse to leave behind the ones I love simply because my name was not reached on a list that was too long. I will fight every day in my mother's honor, for my own future and for the thousands waiting for a second chance at life.

For a moment, I ask you to place yourself in my position, what would you do if it was your mother, father, brother, sister, husband, wife or child waiting on that list? Losing someone as they wait on something as incredibly simple as a list is a heartbreaking, life-shattering and irreversible tragedy, so what will you do to change this?

I would save you, would you save me?