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Rep. Antani Introduces Organ Transplant Waitlist Anti-Discrimination Bill

MIAMISBURG- Today, State Representative Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg) introduced legislation to ensure that individuals with disabilities will not be banned from an organ transplant waitlist solely based on their disability.

People with physical and intellectual disabilities face discrimination in relation to organ transplant waitlists. The lack of federal enforcement under ADA demonstrates the need for state to take action to ensure the rights of individuals with disabilities. Although organ transplant centers must consider medical criteria when determining if a patient is suitable to receive an organ transplant, transplant centers that participate in Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal funding programs are required to use patient selection criteria that result in a fair and non-discriminatory distribution of organs. Ohio residents in need of organ transplants are entitled to assurances that they will not encounter discrimination based on a disability. A physical or intellectual disability should not bar someone from live-saving healthcare.

"The Miami Valley Down Syndrome Association strongly supports equal access to organ transplant waitlist for individuals with disabilities. No person, no matter their disability, should be barred from live-saving procedures like organ transplantation. Individuals with Down syndrome can, with support, manage post-operative treatment and stay healthy years after transplantation surgery. Bill 332 makes clear that discrimination based on disability when it comes to life-saving health care is not acceptable." - Miami Valley Down Syndrome Association

"We wholeheartedly support the Organ Transplant Waitlist Anti-Discrimination Bill and thank Representative Niraj Antani for introducing it to The Ohio House of Representatives. Children and adults with Down syndrome are a vital part of our society – they attend school, play sports, are active in the arts, work, vote, volunteer in their communities, and make a long-lasting and important impact on their friends, family, and coworkers. This legislation will help to protect to people we serve, and their human rights, from discrimination when they are in need of life-saving organ transplants." – Jim Hudson, Executive Director of the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Cincinnati

"We applaud Representative Antani, Representative Leland, and all of the Ohio Representatives who are proactively leading this charge against discriminatory health care practices. Whether or not a person has Down syndrome, or any another developmental disability, should not define their access to life-saving procedures like organ transplantation." -Kari Jones, President & CEO of the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio

"The Autism Society Greater Cincinnati supports the Organ Transplant Waitlist Anti-Discrimination Bill. Our organization is committed to cultivating a community where individuals and families living with autism are able to maximize their quality of life and are treated with the highest level of dignity and respect while living in a society where their talents and skills are appreciated and valued. We believe this bill advances our mission of improving the lives of people with autism." - Jennifer Alge, Esq., Board Secretary of the Autism Society Greater Cincinnati

Five states (Pennsylvania, Maryland, California, New Jersey, and Massachusetts) have passed similar bipartisan legislation to prevent organ transplant waitlist discrimination, and 3 more (Kansas, Delaware, and Oregon) currently have bills working their way through state legislatures.