

Living Donor Act Talking Points

[Take out fact sheet on Living Donor Act].

The second issue we're here to discuss is the Living Donor Act, a bill that would promote organ donation and protect the rights of living organ donors. Every 14 minutes a patient is added to the 100,000+ person kidney wait list and 12 Americans die each day waiting for a kidney transplant.

Transplantation is the best form of kidney replacement therapy for many patients with kidney failure. But, as you can see from this data [point to chart on fact sheet] fewer people than ever have access to transplants.

Not only does transplantation improve patients' quality of life, it's the most cost-effective treatment. It costs Medicare [point to data on fact sheet] about **\$33,000** per transplant patient versus **\$88,000** per hemodialysis patient annually.

The greatest opportunity for savings is in transplanting patients before they even enter the Medicare ESRD Program. Increasing living donation by just 10% is estimated to save Medicare between \$223,227,000 and \$474,814,000 over 10 years.

The Living Donor Act would increase the number of kidney transplants by eliminating obvious and unnecessary barriers to donation. It would [point to list on fact sheet]

1. Prohibit insurance companies from denying or limiting coverage and from charging higher premiums to living organ donors for life, disability, and long term care plans:
 - 11% of living organ donors experience difficulty securing or paying for insurance after their procedures because of discriminatory practices.
 - Studies show that living donation is overall a safe procedure
 - Would *you* donate an organ if you didn't think you could get life insurance, or disability insurance?
 - Banning this discriminatory behavior would eliminate an unnecessary hurdle for those considering donating a kidney to a friend, loved one, or deserving American.
2. Clarify that living organ donors can use "time off" protected by the Family and Medical Leave Act to recover from donation surgery and maintain job security:
 - This provision is critical: kidney donors' hospitalization averages 3-7 days and donors typically do not return sooner than 4 weeks.
 - Without this guarantee, many people who want to be living donor simply cannot afford the risk of unemployment.
3. Directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to create educational materials reflecting important changes we just outlined, and tasks her with encouraging more Americans to consider living donation:
 - Raising awareness is imperative: the number of kidney transplants performed in the US is equal to less than 1% of the number of patients on dialysis annually
 - Making more people aware of the benefits of living kidney donation to those in kidney failure and the new ways this law protects donors' rights would help boost transplant rates overall.

- *Describe personal experiences, anecdotes, etc. related to this issue and why you personally think it is important to pass this bill.*
- *Ask if staff person has any questions about the bill or the stories you shared.*
- *Ask for their boss' support:* I hope your boss will sign on as a co-sponsor to this legislation. Do you need any other information from me or my organization before you bring up co-sponsorship with him?