

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2026

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you strengthen our nation's bipartisan commitment to living organ donors and the more than 100,000 Americans across the country on the transplant waitlist by significantly increasing funding for the Living Organ Donation Reimbursement Program.

Every day, 13 Americans die waiting for an organ transplant.¹ A transplant provides a new lease on life, but our current system is woefully insufficient to meet the demand. Most of these patients suffer from kidney failure and are going through grueling and expensive dialysis treatments, which collectively cost Medicare more than \$55 billion per year.

While the rate of deceased donation has increased in recent years (and will be further strengthened with the implementation of the Securing the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Act (Pub. L. No. 118-14)), the rate of living donations has remained relatively flat over the past two decades at around 6,000 per year.² This is in part because living donors can face costs often exceeding \$10,000 in out-of-pocket expenses when donating, including travel expenses, lost wages from taking time off work, and child care.³

The Living Organ Donation Reimbursement Program, administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in partnership with the University of Kansas and the American Society of Transplant Surgeons, helps low-income donors and recipients defray these costs by providing reimbursements of up to \$6,000 for many expenses related to donating an organ. Research suggests that the vast majority of these donors could not have donated without this program.⁴ Moreover, the recent enactment of the Honor Our Living Donors (HOLD) Act means that this program will now more appropriately gauge eligibility for reimbursement based upon the living donor's own income, not the recipient's income, making this program more directly positioned to keep Americans who give the gift of life from facing out of pocket costs.

However, current restrictions severely limit this program's impact. For example, 21% of donors in the program hit the \$6,000 cap, and income rules disqualify individuals making more than 350% of the federal poverty level (currently \$55,860/year for an individual).⁵ Living donation is also the most cost-effective form of treatment for

¹ [Waitlist deaths decrease: a shared success by the organ donation and transplant community supported by UNOS | UNOS](#)

² OPTN data. Retrieved March 27, 2024 at <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/data/view-data-reports/national-data/>.

³ McCormick F, Held PJ, Chertow GM, Peters TG, Roberts JP. Removing Disincentives to Kidney Donation: A Quantitative Analysis. *J Am Soc Nephrol*. 2019 Aug;30(8):1349-1357. doi: 10.1681/ASN.2019030242. Epub 2019 Jul 25. PMID: 31345987; PMCID: PMC6683718.

⁴ Mathur AK, Xing J, Dickinson DM, et al. Return on investment for financial assistance for living kidney donors in the United States. *Clin Transplant*. 2018;e13277. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ctr.13277>.

⁵ Policy Strategies to Reduce Financial Risks for Living Donors. *Kidney* 360.

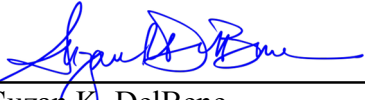
kidney failure, with even conservative estimates demonstrating \$100,000 in savings over 10 years versus dialysis.⁶


No one should have to pay to donate a lifesaving organ.

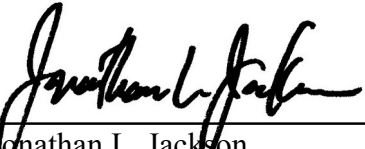
Therefore, we request a funding increase to significantly expand income eligibility and total reimbursement levels to allow as many donors as possible to qualify.


Thank you for your consideration.


Sincerely,


Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

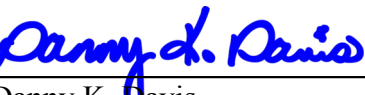

Carol D. Miller
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress

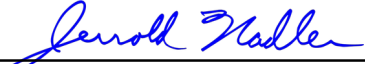

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress


David Scott
Member of Congress


Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress


Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress


Terrold Nadler
Member of Congress


Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

⁶ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10371270/>