Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 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, 17 Americans die waiting for an organ transplant. 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 $50 billion per year.

While the rate of deceased donation has improved in recent years (and will be further strengthened by the critical investments your committee is making in the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Modernization Initiative), the rate of living donations has flatlined over the past two decades at around 6,000 per year.1 This is in part because living donors can face costs exceeding $10,000 in out-of-pocket expenses when donating, including travel expenses, lost wages from taking time off work, and child care.2

The Living Organ Donation Reimbursement Program, which is currently 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.3 However, current restrictions severely limit this program’s impact. For example, 30% of donors in the program hit the $6,000 cap,4 and income rules disqualify individuals making more than 350% of the federal poverty level (currently $53,000/year for an individual).

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.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Bill Posey
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Member of Congress