

LETTERS

The Many Gifts of Kidney Donation

Feb. 22, 2026

To the Editor:

Re “The Case for Radical Generosity,” by German Lopez (Opinion, Feb. 8):

On behalf of the American Society of Nephrology, I commend Mr. Lopez for his courageous decision to become a living kidney donor and to encourage others to do the same. We need more champions like him.

Thankfully, the United States Congress feels the same way. On Feb. 3, the federal government passed the Honor Our Living Donors (HOLD) Act. This law ensures that living donors who qualify based on their own income are reimbursed for the ancillary costs of their donation, such as travel and time away from work.

Thanks to the bipartisan, bicameral leadership of Senator John Boozman of Arkansas and Representative Jay Obernolte of California, both Republicans, and Senator Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico and Representative Suzan DelBene of Washington, both Democrats, a major financial hurdle to living donation has now been removed.

Samir M. Parikh

Dallas

The writer is the president of the American Society of Nephrology and a professor of internal medicine and pharmacology and the chief of nephrology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

To the Editor:

Thank you for publishing German Lopez's article on kidney donation. In 2008, I donated a kidney to my severely ill daughter-in-law, and it remains the best decision I have ever made. The donation itself was far less difficult than I had anticipated, my recovery was swift and uneventful, and the long-term impact on my health has been negligible.

As a woman in my 50s who was unable to have children, I found that the experience offered me an unexpected gift — the profound privilege of giving life to another person. The sense of meaning and fulfillment that came from this simple act is difficult to overstate. I am now turning 78 and continue to live an active, fully engaged life, with no adverse effects from living with one kidney.

Rebecca Brackett
Santa Fe, N.M.

To the Editor:

I donated a kidney in March 1997 to my brother. I did not have any health issues, and my brother was on dialysis, not living his best quality life. I was 37 years old and single at the time. I had been involved in a car accident while stopped at a red light. I did not have any major injuries, but I realized that tomorrow is not guaranteed.

I decided to get the testing and ended up being a perfect match. I then notified my brother. The donor operation was much more invasive than it is today, but I had the surgery, and to this day it is the best gift I have ever given.

My brother was able to marry and have two children. I also married and was able to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. This year will be 29 years, and we are both still in good health.

Lauri Dougherty
Milford, Conn.

To the Editor:

I am a 17-year-old who has grown up seeing our society give in to individualism — perhaps a defense mechanism activated in reaction to the constant, pervasive fear and control that the current administration and the global climate have instilled in us. But I’ve also found ways, much similar to donating a kidney, to cope.

From helping my grandparents carry grocery bags to their house or shoveling my neighbor’s sidewalk without their asking, I’ve tried my best to be a positive force in my community, helping others in tangible ways while helping my own soul and hope for the world. And, somewhere in my heart, I know that what goes around comes around: The love and work that I put in for others will, in some way, come back to me when I need it most.

I encourage every able person to look into donating a kidney, whether while alive or after death. Together, we can build a chain of care and kindness that will support us in these individualistic times.

Alexander Blaustein
Brooklyn

To the Editor:

Like German Lopez, I donated one of my kidneys because I wanted to make a positive difference, and, like him, I thought my effort seemed an apt “rejection of the day’s politics” and “an opportunity to do something big.” Helping others feels good because it is right, and it feels right because it is good.

But for me, it’s also something more: I see donating my kidney as a protest against the deception, callousness and cruelty of the Trump administration.

Altruism can demonstrate that most of us are not as bad as the president claims, that his Hobbesian caricatures just do not fit us. Sometimes, helping others is an act of meaningful defiance.

Clint Talbott
Nederland, Colo.

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