

TESTIMONY OF COLLEEN JAMISON

IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2472

JANUARY 23, 2018

Good morning Chairman Hawkins, Vice Chair Concannon, Representative Murnan, and members of the Committee.

I come before you today to testify in support of House Bill 2472, which would amend Kansas law relating to driver's license and state-issued identification cards. The proposed amendments make it easier for applicants to have indicated on their driver's license or state-issued identification cards whether they wish to be, upon their death, an organ, eye, or tissue donor in accordance with the revised uniform anatomical gift act.

I would like to introduce you to my husband, Alonzo Jamison. You may remember him from his time playing basketball at the University of Kansas from 1989 through 1992, including that amazing 1991 season concluding with, unfortunately, a loss to Duke in the National Championship game.

As a result of complications from diabetes, Alonzo was diagnosed in 2014 with Stage IV Renal failure and had to begin a life-saving process called peritoneal dialysis. This form of dialysis involved the placement in his abdomen of a catheter system which filtered the toxins in his body, replacing the work of his non-functioning kidneys. The dialysis involved being hooked up to a machine for ten to eleven hours a night, every night, which would filter a solution through his abdominal catheter. Another form of dialysis called hemo dialysis, which you may be more familiar with, involves a patient visiting a dialysis center and having their blood filtered through a machine, three to four times a week, in a process that takes four to five hours.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, 30 million American adults (1 in 7) are estimated to have chronic kidney disease, but most don't even know they have it. Approximately 1 in 3 adults with diabetes and 1 in 5 adults with high blood pressure may have chronic kidney disease. Nearly 680,000 Americans have irreversible kidney failure, or end-stage renal disease (ESRD), and need dialysis or a kidney transplant to survive. Over 475,000 ESRD patients receive dialysis at least 3 times per week to replace kidney function. 121,000 people started ESRD treatment in 2014, of which 118,000 started dialysis. Over 200,000 Americans live with a kidney transplant. 100,000 Americans are waiting on a kidney transplant right now. But only about 19,000 will receive one this year, one-third of which will come from living donors. CKD shortens life expectancy by 5–11 years. Over 95,000 people with kidney failure died in 2014. The number of people who die prematurely from all stages of kidney disease and conditions related to kidney disease is much, much higher.

Alonzo was one of the fortunate ones. One year ago tomorrow, he received a kidney donated from a living donor, a young man named Shekinah Bailey. The name Shekinah means “the presence of God on earth or a symbol or manifestation of His presence.” I think all will agree with me that this is a fitting name for the man who quite literally saved my husband's life.

But not everyone waiting for a kidney or other organ transplant has their own “Shekinah.” According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, every ten minutes someone is added to the national transplant waiting list. On average, 20 people die each day waiting for an organ transplant. Yet one single donor can save as many as eight lives. As of this past Friday, there were 115,185 people waiting for an organ transplant. Only 34,772 transplants were performed over the last year. Organs that can be transplanted are the liver, kidney, pancreas,

kidney/pancreas (transplanted at the same time), heart, lung, heart/lung (transplanted at the same time), intestine, and face and hand transplantation.

It is clear that organ donation and transplants saves lives. What may not be as clear is that organ donation and transplants also save money. Take Alonzo and his dialysis. Although various sources indicate the yearly cost for hemodialysis is \$89,000, while the yearly cost for peritoneal dialysis is \$53,000, I know that when Alonzo was on dialysis, our insurance paid out over \$10,000 PER WEEK for his daily dialysis treatments. In a year and a half of dialysis treatment, that amounted to over \$800,000. Contrast that with the just over \$125,000 paid for his kidney transplant and treatment since and I think anyone would agree that encouraging organ donation encourages cost savings at all levels.

I think it is obvious that the need for donors is staggering. By making it even easier for people to make their organ donation wishes known, this bill will, quite simply, save money but, more importantly, save lives. I urge you today to pass House Bill 2472, and I would stand for any questions the Committee may have. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support.