

Congressman Stephen F. Lynch, MA-8
House Energy and Commerce Committee Member Day Testimony
December 12, 2025

Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about a bipartisan piece of legislation that has the potential to help save American lives.

Well over 100,000 Americans are currently waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, with around 5,000 in my home region of New England. The vast majority of these patients, around 85 percent, need a kidney, followed by requests for a liver or heart. Yet every day about 13 will die waiting.

Living donation, where a healthy living person donates an organ, or part of an organ, for transplantation, can do so much to literally save lives. Transplants have successfully been used with living donations of a full kidney or a portion of one's liver, lung, pancreas or intestine.

I know firsthand the difference that this kind of donation can make. In 2001, with the assistance of the transplant team at Leahy Hospital in Massachusetts I was able to successfully donate a portion of my liver to my brother-in-law Joe O'Leary who is a Vietnam Veteran. After 20 years Joe and our family are immensely grateful that this option was available to him and that his life could be saved.

However, the process of being a living donor has its challenges. It is a major medical procedure and requires time to prepare and recover, for the donor as much as for the patient. But if the potential donor cannot get the time off or the job protection needed to do so, it can have a chilling effect. In addition, life, disability, and long-term care insurance companies have discriminated against living donors, charging them higher premiums or denying them coverage entirely, solely on the basis of being a living donor. Such barriers are wrong and are costing lives.

It should not have to be this way, and this is where H.R. 4583 can make a world of difference.

H.R. 4583, the Living Donor Protection Act, protects living organ donors and promotes organ donation by prohibiting life, disability, and long-term care insurance companies from denying or limiting coverage to living donors and prevents those companies from

charging them higher premiums based solely on donor status. It amends existing law to specifically allow private and civil service employees to use FMLA leave to recover from donation surgery, and, finally, it directs HHS to help increase public awareness of these protections thereby encouraging more individuals to consider being a living organ donor.

Over 30 states have already enacted similar protections, and it is time for the federal government to follow suit. H.R. 4583 has over 100 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, and its Senate companion bill also has strong bipartisan support. Finally, this bill has strong support from the broader transplant community, including patients, advocates, medical practitioners, and other support organizations. I urge the Committee to do all it can to bring H.R. 4583 through the Committee and to the Floor of the House of Representatives for a vote.

Thank you very much for the time.