

# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FEBRUARY 13, 2018**

**CONTACT:** Anastasia Henry | Executive Director | American Transplant Foundation  
| [anastasia@americantransplantfoundation.org](mailto:anastasia@americantransplantfoundation.org)

## **February 14<sup>th</sup> National Donor Day Celebrated with Introduction of New Living Organ Donor Bill**

Colorado bill would support living organ donors

*COLORADO – This year, National Donor Day on February 14th is being celebrated with an introduction of Living Organ Donor Support Act.*

### **WHY IT MATTERS:**

In 2017, more Coloradans died or became too sick to remain on the waitlist than the number of Coloradans who died as a result of homicide. This could be eliminated if more Coloradans became living donors, and the passage of this bill will help that happen.

Currently, only Colorado state employees may take up to two days of paid leave specifically for organ donation.

Several barriers exist for living organ donors in the state that may prevent them from considering donation. For many potential donors, socioeconomic status and financial pressures can largely influence one's decision to donate an organ. The ability to get paid time off work, for instance, is an enormous barrier for donors, who fear losing their income or job should they choose to donate.

This bill will raise awareness and encourage both directed and non-directed living donation, encouraging and helping individuals to donate lifesaving organs without suffering significant financial hardship as a result of the donation.

### **WHAT WILL CHANGE?**

**If passed, Colorado's Living Donor Support Act would help to address this problem.** An employee donating an organ will be granted paid leave not exceeding 10 working days (or the hourly equivalent) and for the cost of temporary replacement help, if any, during an employee's leave of absence period.

For any employer granting paid time off to living organ donors in the state of Colorado, employers shall be entitled to a tax credit of 35% of the employee's regular salary for up to 10 business days. Employees who receive less than \$80,000 annually are eligible.

## **HOW TO SUPPORT:**

1. Support living donors by signing the petition started by the American Transplant Foundation:

<https://actionsprout.io/132AC2>

2. If you would like to become an advocate for this legislation please email:

[support@americantransplantfoundation.org](mailto:support@americantransplantfoundation.org)

**Bill Background:** The Living Donor Support Act would provide a tax credit of 35% to employers granting paid time off to employees becoming living organ donors in Colorado. Employees who receive less than \$80,000 annually eligible.

**Legislative Support:** This bill has the bipartisan support of leadership in the Colorado General Assembly, with State Representative Alec Garnett and State Senator Bob Gardner.

**Endorsements:** Leading organization – American Transplant Foundation. Several stakeholders across many fields have endorsed this goal of encouraging living donation through tax credit legislation. They include: NKF Serving Colorado, New Mexico, Montana, and Wyoming, UHealth Transplant Center, Donor Alliance, and Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Medical Center – Transplant Center.

**Senator Bob Gardner** said, *“Living organ donation is not only the most effective way to eliminate the organ transplant waitlist in Colorado, but it also the most economically beneficial way to address many chronic health issues, particularly kidney disease. On average, for each transplant patient taken off of dialysis, Medicare saves over \$500,000 over the course of ten years.”*

**State Representative Alec Garnett** said, *“Living organ donors should not face significant financial hardship or risk losing their jobs because they are willing to give the Gift of Life. This bill will benefit the many in need of a lifesaving transplant, and it will allow those donating an organ to take time off to recover without financial stress.”*

**Altruistic kidney donor Sara Martin** said, *“I think there are a lot of people that would become a living donor, but without the security of knowing their employer is supportive, they feel they can't. With this certainty, it could shift some potential living donors from ‘no, I can't’ to ‘yes, I can.’”*

**Anastasia Henry**, American Transplant Foundation’s Executive Director, said *“Living organ donation is not only the most effective way to eliminate the organ transplant waitlist in Colorado, but it also the most economically beneficial way to address kidney disease. Our hope is that this legislation will bring us a step closer to making Colorado the first state where nobody dies while waiting for a transplant.”*