



March 27, 2014

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

From: Diana Benningfield

Date & Time of Hearing: 9:45 am, Friday, March 28, 2014, Room 211, State Capital, 415 South Beretania Street

Re: Testimony in support of HB 2400 - RELATING TO TEMPORARY DISABILITY BENEFITS

My name is Diana Benningfield. I am a non-directed living kidney donor employed with the National Kidney Foundation of Hawaii. I am passionate about the need for organ donation and especially for the need for living donors. Approximately 90% of all people awaiting a transplant are waiting for kidneys. As a member of the Hawaii Organ Transplant Council, Hawaii Coalition on Donation and the Hawaii Living Donor Council, I see the results a transplant can have in the life of the transplant recipient and in the members of their family. Transplantation does not lead to people merely surviving. Rather, the gift of transplantation results in lives filled with health, gratitude and most often, a meaningful contribution to their communities and families.

I strongly support HB 2400 which amends Section 1., the definition of "disability" in section 392-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes to read ""Disability" meaning total inability of an employee to perform the duties of the employee's employment caused by sickness, pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, organ donation, or accident other than a work injury as defined in section 386-3 and Section II., which also adds organ donation as a disability.

The National Kidney Foundation of Hawaii already has a policy for leave for this purpose and I was fortunate that I never had to address the fear of not receiving a paycheck. With the many considerations a donor must face, it is comforting not to have to think about that issue. As an administrator, I fully understand the need to keep costs in line, but I believe it is imperative to give assistance to someone willing to donate an organ to save someone's life. I cannot tell you how many times someone has called me for information or assistance to help pay their bills while they were out of work after donating an organ to their child, family member or friend. It is heart breaking to have to tell them there is not an avenue to pursue. I know of several transplants that did not take place, because the donor could not afford to take 30 days off for recovery.

I urge the committee to pass HB 2400. It is an important step toward removing another barrier to organ and tissue donation and saving lives in Hawaii.

Thank you for your serious and thoughtful consideration of the bill and submitted testimony. I can be reached at 589-5961 or [Diana@kidneyhi.org](mailto:Diana@kidneyhi.org) for additional information or questions.

Sincerely,

Diana Benningfield  
Director of Organizational Planning and Operations  
National Kidney Foundation of Hawaii