

June 3, 2025

Representative Jay Obernolte
U.S. House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Suzan DelBene
U.S. House of Representatives
2330 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: ASTS Endorsement – Support for the *Honor Our Living Donors (HOLD) Act* (H.R. 628)

Dear Reps. Obernolte and DelBene:

On behalf of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS), representing over 2,000 surgeons, physicians, and scientists dedicated to excellence in transplant surgery, thank you for introducing the *Helping Organ Donors Lead (HOLD) Act* (H.R. 628) critical legislation that removes outdated financial barriers for living organ donors and takes meaningful steps toward equity and access in transplantation.

Living donors make a lifesaving and selfless gift, yet far too often, they are left to bear the financial burdens of that generosity. The HOLD Act wisely updates the criteria used to determine eligibility under the federal Living Organ Donation Reimbursement Program by removing two key restrictions: (1) the consideration of the recipient's income in determining a donor's eligibility, and (2) the presumption that a recipient could or should reimburse a donor directly.

By eliminating these limitations, the HOLD Act ensures that donor reimbursement decisions are based solely on the donor's needs—not the recipient's financial situation. This is a commonsense and long-overdue fix. The current rules create inequitable and unnecessary disincentives to donation, particularly harming patients with middle-income or higher-income support systems whose donors may be excluded from reimbursement through no fault of their own. We encourage the bill champions to consider additional provisions to increase the maximum reimbursement level to \$10,000, with discretion given to the Secretary to keep payments within the budget provided.

Moreover, the bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate and report whether the existing reimbursement framework adequately covers the full range of expenses donors face. This important provision recognizes that travel and lodging are only part of the financial burden donors may bear and sets the stage for a stronger and more data-informed program in the future.

The transplant community—including patients, providers, and donor advocates—has long supported efforts to reduce the logistical and financial barriers to living donation. The HOLD Act is a thoughtful, targeted step in that direction, and it will

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help increase access to transplantation, particularly for low-income and underserved populations.

We applaud your leadership in championing this legislation and look forward to working together to support its swift passage. For further information, contact ASTS's Legislative Counsel – Peggy.Tighe@PowersLaw.com – or ASTS' Associate Director, Advocacy & Professional Practices – Emily.Besser@asts.org.

Sincerely,

Ginny L. Bumgardner, MD, PhD, FACS