



March 18, 2025

Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Labor
Arkansas House of Representatives

Dear Committee Members,

Each year, members of the Eye Bank Association of America recover, process, and distribute nearly 80,000 corneas for sight-restoring transplant procedures. The organ, eye, and tissue donor registries hosted by each state are invaluable to this mission, allowing eye banks to swiftly and efficiently honor the selfless decisions of individuals who chose to give the gift of sight. However, HB 1679 threatens to disrupt this vital process, restricting access to donated tissues and impacting the lives of your constituents.

The decision to register as an organ, eye, and tissue donor is a deeply personal and deliberate choice, reflecting an individual's clear and generous intent. The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act rightfully upholds that such decisions should not be overturned without compelling justification. Unfortunately, HB 1679 introduces ten categories of individuals who could rescind a donor's legally registered gift. This could mean that dozens of individuals—many in the throes of grief—would have the power to override a decision made with careful thought and altruism.

Time is of the essence in corneal donation. Corneas must be recovered within 24 hours of death, as cellular deterioration begins immediately. The additional burden of reaffirming a donor's decision with multiple family members, potentially seeking majority approval, will cause unnecessary delays, confusion, and, ultimately, the loss of viable corneas that could have restored sight to those in need. Beyond the medical impact, this process imposes an emotional toll on grieving families, compounding their distress at an already difficult time.

While EBAA's focus is corneal donation, we stand in solidarity with our partners in organ and musculoskeletal donation. It is important to recognize that Arkansas had the nation's ninth-highest rate of chronic kidney disease in 2023, highlighting just one of the many groups who would suffer from the reduced availability of donated organs and tissues should HB 1679 pass.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 1679 to protect the integrity of the donor registry and ensure that selfless gifts of life and sight are honored. Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K P Corcoran", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Kevin P. Corcoran
President & CEO
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