



Improving Human Life by Advancing
the Field of Transplantation

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September 22, 2008

The Honorable Arlen Specter
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support of Organ Donation Clarification Act of 2008

Dear Senator Specter:

On behalf of the American Society of Transplantation (AST), representing the majority of professionals engaged in the field of solid organ transplantation, we applaud your longstanding commitment to strengthening medical research and clinical patient care. From bench to bedside, your leadership in the U.S. Congress has been key to improving our nation's healthcare delivery system. Most recently, we commend you for seeking to clarify and protect the ability of government to explore and examine the feasibility and success of incentives to increase the rate of living donation.

It is the position of AST that, "Living donors, families, or friends of living or cadaveric donors ought not to profit financially, nor should they be financially disadvantaged from donation." The Society is opposed to payment for organs from living and cadaveric donors. However, the organization does support:

- Recognition of both cadaveric and living organ donors for their unselfish gift of life;
- Careful study and federal funding of proposals, such as donor registries and financial incentives, that may have a positive effect on the rate of cadaveric organ donation; and
- Federal funding of studies of the science of organ donation, in order to optimize the management of the deceased organ donor.

AST appreciates the intent of your legislation, the "Organ Donation Clarification Act of 2008", to clarify that Congress and Section 301 of NOTA did not intend to criminalize or completely close the door on government incentives to improve rates for living donation. Similar to the "Charlie Norwood Living Organ Donation Act", which clarified that the practice of paired donation was not intended to be outlawed, your legislation is a solid first step toward insuring that government incentives for living donation may be proposed and explored without the threat of judicial intervention and legal recourse. Our Society also appreciates that your bill does not seek to establish, fund or propose any specific incentives.

We look forward to further working with you on this and other important issues to improve our nation's ability to provide the gift-of-life to the thousands of individuals currently awaiting a life saving donor organ.

Sincerely,

Barbara Murphy, MD
President

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**AMERICAN TRANSPLANT
CONGRESS 2009**

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