



TEXAS OPHTHALMOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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April 23, 2019

Rep. Senfronia Thompson
Chair, House Public Health
Committee Room 3S.6
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Madame Chair Thompson:

The Texas Ophthalmological Association (TOA), a nonprofit medical specialty society, is dedicated to enhancing the lives of eyecare patients. One of the most pressing and devastating issues in eyecare is the loss of patients' vision. Despite the advancement of non-invasive treatments for diseases that cause vision loss, there are many cases in which ocular organ transplants, particularly corneal transplants, are the best and only way to save a patient's sight.

The TOA would like to express its support of HB 3874, a bill that would convert Texas to a presumed consent or 'opt-out' organ donor state when acquiring or renewing a driver's license. Studies have shown that this is the most effective method for capturing the intent to donate and would be a reversal from Texas' current 'opt-in' policy.

This change is crucial because the current opt-in policy, which has applicants indicate if they do want to be an organ donor, fails many Texas patients. Last year alone, 563 patients on the Texas waitlist died because of the unavailability of a life-saving organ, and another 873 were removed because they were designated "Too Sick to Transplant," which led to their deaths.

Most European countries have adopted opt-out organ donor registry policies because they result in higher consent and transplant rates. The adoption of HB 3874 would allow for the rapid growth of our state's organ donor registry, providing relief for countless patients with sight-threatening and life-threatening diseases.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Texas' patients. We look forward to working with you on this important issue. Should you have questions or concerns, please contact Rachael Reed, executive director at 512-370-1518 or exec@texaseyes.org.

Sincerely,

Sanjiv Kumar, MD
President