

March 27, 2019

Assembly Member Ash Kalra
Chair
Committee on Labor and Employment
1020 N Street, Room 155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member Heath Flora
Vice Chair
Committee on Labor and Employment
1020 N Street, Room 155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB 1223

Dear Chairman Kalra and Vice Chairman Flora:

With 33,000 dialysis patient members, over 4,000 of whom reside in California, Dialysis Patient Citizens (DPC) is the nation's largest patient-led organization representing individuals with end-stage renal disease (ESRD). On behalf of California's 70,000 ESRD patients and the DPC Board of Directors, I am writing to express our strong support for AB 1223 which would improve access to kidney transplantation for patients by strengthening protections for living organ donors.

I am a lifelong resident of California and currently serve as the Secretary for the Board of Directors for DPC. I have been on and off of dialysis since I was 12 years old after I was diagnosed with kidney failure as a result of a bicycle accident. I was lucky enough to receive a transplant from my mother which lasted for seven years until my body rejected it in 2000. I went back on dialysis and had to wait over ten years to receive a new transplant. California has, on average, the longest wait times for organ donation and AB 1223 would hopefully shorten these wait times for patients.

As you know, existing law requires a private employer to permit an employee to take a leave of absence with pay, not exceeding 30 business days in a one-year period, for the purpose of organ donation. Existing law also requires a public employer to permit a public employee to take a similar paid leave of absence for organ donation, if the employee has exhausted all available sick leave.

AB 1223 would require a private or public employer to grant an employee an additional unpaid leave of absence, not exceeding 30 business days in a one-year period, for the purpose of organ donation. The bill would also require a public employee to first exhaust all available sick leave before taking that unpaid leave. Strengthening protections for living donors will remove many of the administrative burdens and unexpected consequences that prevent many people from becoming a living donor.

Transplantation is the ideal option for most dialysis patients, however, like me, many patients must wait years for a kidney to become available. In a lot of states, the average wait time for dialysis patients to receive a transplant is 4.2 years (based on DPC's 2018 patient survey) but for some patients that wait time can be much longer – 26% of our patients have had to wait 6-10 years, such as many patients in California. AB 1223 would encourage more people to become a living donor and help our patients get access to more transplantations. I appreciate your consideration of this information and strongly urge you to support AB 1223.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danny Iniguez', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Danny Iniguez
Secretary and Board Member
Dialysis Patient Citizens