

Assembly Bill 2504

Living Organ Donor Reimbursement Act Assembly Member Ash Kalra

SUMMARY

AB 2504 would reduce financial barriers for living organ donors by establishing the Living Donor Reimbursement Program to allow donors to recoup up to \$10,000 of expenses they incurred for the costs associated with organ donation.

BACKGROUND

According to the most recent data available, in 2019, 16,780 new cases of kidney failure were diagnosed in California.ⁱ Of the 110,332 patients receiving treatments for kidney failure in California that same year, less than 2% received kidney transplants while the remainder went on dialysis treatment.ⁱⁱ Without treatment, whether it be dialysis or a transplant, kidney failure is fatal.

In 2021, a total of 2,777 kidney transplants were performed in California with less than 25% of donations coming from living organ donors.ⁱⁱⁱ

California received a B grade on the American Kidney Fund's 2021 State of the States: Living Donor Protection Report Card as we lag behind other states in enacting policies that support an individual's decision to become a living organ donor. Out of seven possible types of living donor protection legislation, California currently only has three laws on the books—job-protected leave for public employees, job-protected leave for private employees, and anti-insurance discrimination from life, disability, and long-term care insurers.

In addition to the need for policy offering donors general protections, the financial burden associated with the donation often serves as an additional barrier to those considering this decision. While a transplant recipient's health insurance typically pays all surgery costs for the living donor, it does not necessarily reimburse out-of-pocket expenses such as travel, lodging, childcare, and medications.

SOLUTION

AB 2504 would establish the Living Organ Donor Reimbursement program for living organ donors to recover expenses up to \$10,000 through the California Department of Health Care Services. This reimbursement program will help lessen any potential financial obstacles for living donors to make a lifesaving choice.

The bill would authorize living organ donors, as defined, to apply to the department for reimbursement of qualified donor expenses until January 1, 2027. Eligible reimbursable expenses include travel and lodging, lost wages, childcare, medication, and other out-of-pocket costs.

AB 2504 will enhance organ donor policies, leading to increased support for living organ donors while encouraging more organ donations and saving lives. The Living Organ Donor Reimbursement Act establishes California as a model for other states seeking to lessen the financial barriers that living donors face.

SPONSOR

American Kidney Fund

CONTACT

Erika Salazar, Legislative Aide
Erika.Salazar@asm.ca.gov
(916) 319-2027

ⁱ United States Renal Data System. 2021 USRDS Annual Data Report: Epidemiology of kidney disease in the United States. National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Bethesda, MD, 2021.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network