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VALLEE CO-SPONSORS BILL TO INCREASE ORGAN DONATION

Bill pushes to increase rate of organ donation within the Commonwealth

(BOSTON)- Representative James E. Vallee (*D – Franklin*) has recently co-sponsored legislation with several colleagues that is designed to take steps towards increasing the rates of organ donation and most particularly pediatric organ donation within the Commonwealth. The bill titled, “Jackson’s Bill,” after Jackson Altieri, a 3 year old boy whose successful heart transplant received extensive media attention last year, is intended to implement several significant additions to the current organ donation law.

Currently, Massachusetts’ donor rates are not much to boast about. The state is statistically well behind the likes of Indiana and Minnesota, where approximately two thirds of licensed drivers are registered organ donors.

“In spite of the growing disparity between organ supply and demand in Massachusetts, there have been very few attempts to close this gap,” said Vallee. “My intention with this bill is to ensure that citizens of Massachusetts in need of transplants have an increased opportunity of receiving the proper donation.”

The bill implements a number of additions to the organ donation law and restructures the current Advisory Council on Organ Transplants as the Organ Transplants and Donation Advisory Council. The purpose of the current council was to offer rates of reimbursement for immunosuppressant drugs for organ transplant recipients. Since those rates have been set, the current council is obsolete. The goal of the council is to now shift towards studying ways in which rates may be increased for adult and pediatric organ

donation. They are progressively examining ways in which people can be given more opportunities to register as a donor. The council is studying the possibility of including an organ donation option on voter registration forms. No matter what, the council is going to continue to work towards significantly increasing organ donation rates to provide a new beginning for many people in need of transplants.

“This bill addresses a crucial issue within the Commonwealth that has been overlooked,” Vallee said. “In order to change these statistics and give hope to individuals we need to develop ways in which people are more aware of the opportunity to register as a donor. If we can close the gap between the organ supply and demand, it will be an enormous success which will in turn provide a new life for many individuals and families.”

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