

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chairman
Members, House Environmental Matters Committee
The Honorable Galen Clagett

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
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DATE: March 1, 2013

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 912 – *Driver Education Program – Classroom Instruction – Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation Education*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,500 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 912.

House Bill 912 seeks to address a challenging health issue – the need for more robust organ donation – by proposing a practical and cost-effective approach to potentially increasing the number of individuals to volunteer to be organ donors. The Bill requires that 30 minutes of the required 30 hours of driver education classroom instruction include an online course dedicated to education on organ, eye, and tissue donation and how to become a donor. The course can be taken in or outside the classroom.

Organ donation is vitally important to the thousands of individuals who have either received or are waiting for an organ donation. Despite the more than 100 million individuals who have volunteered to be organ donors, the need for donated organs remains significant. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports 18 people die each day while on the waiting list for an organ donor and that, as of January 16, 2013, 116,674 Americans are waiting for an organ donation.

About 50% of Maryland residents age 18 and older are designated donors, with Maryland ranking 28th out of 50 States in Donate Life America's 2012 Report Card on donor designation. Maryland can do better and there is no easier way to improve Maryland's statistics than to provide education about organ donation and its benefits to new drivers when they prepare to become licensed. Effective education regarding organ donation during driver

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education will undoubtedly result in an increase in donor designations at the time of initial licensure. Once designated as a donor, that designation is retained unless a donor specifically requests the designation be removed from their license, an extremely rare occurrence.

MedChi applauds the sponsor for proposing a simple, cost-effective and comprehensive approach to need for broad public education of the importance of organ donation. MedChi urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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