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June 12, 2017

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
U.S. House of Representatives
2109 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
U.S. House of Representatives
1107 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Nadler and Herrera Beutler:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing in support of H.R. 1270, the “Living Donor Protection Act of 2017.” This important bill would provide several important protections to living organ donors that would help address barriers against becoming living organ donors.

The number of patients who are candidates for organ transplants far exceeds the number of organs available. As of June 12, 2017, the United Network for Organ Sharing estimates that 117,688 people need a lifesaving organ transplant (total waiting list candidates), and of those, 75,840 people are active waiting list candidates. However, there were only 6,608 donors as of June 11. Despite these sobering numbers, thousands of individuals are willing to donate organs to save the lives of family members, friends, and even strangers. And, more individuals might do so if certain barriers were removed, such as ensuring protections against discrimination with regard to life, disability, and long-term care insurance coverage, and clarifying that living organ donors may use time under the Family and Medical Leave Act to recover from the surgeries and procedures involved in their donation. By providing such protections, and requiring the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to update educational materials related to live organ donation to reflect such changes, your bill would help to encourage more individuals to consider donating an organ.

The AMA commends you for your leadership in sponsoring this much needed legislation.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD