



Charlotte Woodward Organ Transplant Discrimination Prevention Act (S. 1782 / H.R. 1520)

Legislative Request

The Charlotte Woodward Organ Transplant Discrimination Prevention Act (S. 1782/H.R. 1520) passed the House in 2025 and remains pending in the Senate. We urge Senators to cosponsor the bill and thank Representatives for their continued engagement as the legislation advances.

Background

Despite existing civil rights protections, individuals with Down syndrome and other disabilities continue to face both willful and unintended discrimination in organ transplantation. A 2019 report from the National Council on Disability (NCD) found that people with disabilities have been denied access to lifesaving transplants due to subjective judgments about quality of life, and misconceptions about the ability of individuals with disabilities to comply with post-operative care. Furthermore, the report found that some transplant programs completely exclude people with disabilities, sometimes refusing even to evaluate them for eligibility.

Bill Summary

The Charlotte Woodward Organ Transplant Discrimination Prevention Act upholds, clarifies, and builds upon rights established in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Sec. 504 of the Rehab Act, and Sec. 1557 of the Affordable Care Act. The bill prohibits covered entities from determining that an individual is ineligible to receive a transplant, deny an organ transplant or related service, refuse to refer the individual to an organ transplant center, or refuse to place an individual on a waiting list based solely on the fact that the individual has a disability.

Impact

There have been several instances in which members of the Down syndrome community were unable to get the lifesaving transplants they needed and tragically passed away. This bill would ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to an organ transplant system free from discrimination. Furthermore, the bill provides those that feel they have been discriminated against the recourse they need to seek life-saving relief in a timely manner.

For more information, please contact our policy team at policy@ndss.org.