

# Jeremy Thiesfeldt

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 52nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## **Testimony on Assembly Bill 578 Organ Donor Bill Bill Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage**

Hello Chairman Pronschinske and Honored Members of the Committee. Thank you for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 578, a bill which will help save lives in Wisconsin.

This bill will help expand the organ donor base for organ donation by allowing anyone applying for a hunting, fishing, or trapping license to choose to include their name on the organ donor registry, if they so choose.

Organ donation can save a life. Over 2,000 of our Wisconsin residents are on the waiting list for the Organ and Tissue Donation Program, and there are well over 100,000 individuals on the national waiting list is over 107,000. The need for organ donation is great. According to DHS, 17 people die each day waiting for an organ transplant. Every donor can save 8 lives, so the impact that this legislation can have can be great.

By expanding the organ donor base for organ donation, we can help save lives and bring increased awareness to this important issue.

Please join us in supporting this life-enhancing bill. Thank you.



**DAN FEYEN**

**STATE SENATOR**

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To: The Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage  
From: Sen. Dan Feyen  
Re: Assembly Bill 578

Hello, committee members. Thank you for taking time today to hear testimony on Assembly Bill 578.

There are currently over 2,000 fellow Wisconsinites that are on the waiting list for life saving organ transplants. It is estimated that every single organ donor can save eight lives, so expanding the donor base and increasing visibility on this issue is incredibly important.

This bill provides another avenue for Wisconsinites to add their name to the organ donor database. AB 578 gives anyone older than 15 and a half, who purchases a hunting, fishing, or trapping license from the DNR the option of registering to be an organ donor.

As I'm sure we are familiar, the DOT currently allows Wisconsinites to add their name to the donor registry through driver's licenses and identification cards. The DOT maintains this donor list and is required to cooperate with the Department of Health Services in establishing a donor registry. This bill expands this current operation to require the DNR to also cooperate with DHS for the same purpose. Just like at DOT, the DNR would indicate a person's donor status on a printed license, a conservation card, or a donor card.

This bipartisan legislation can help to expand the donor list and help to connect those waiting for life-saving procedures to their donor match.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. With that, I am happy to answer any questions the committee has.

**Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage**  
**Testimony provided by Mary Nachreiner**  
**January 12, 2022**  
**RE: Support for Assembly Bill 578**

Chairman Pronschinske and members of the committee,

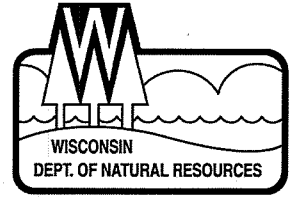
My name is Mary Nachreiner, Community Outreach Coordinator for UW Organ and Tissue Donation. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of Assembly Bill 578 related to choosing to be a donor of an anatomical gift when applying for a hunting, fishing, or trapping license. It's been over 20 years since I testified in this building in support of another organ donation bill – The Kelly Nachreiner Bill, in honor of my daughter Kelly. Kelly chose to be an organ donor one month before a fatal car crash took her life and the bill named in her honor has helped to educate thousands of students and undoubtedly saved many lives. We know for a fact her organ donation saved the lives of 3 strangers and her legacy in being a donor saved our lives –the loved ones she left behind.

It's no secret that the demand for organs outpaces available donations. Just in Wisconsin, 1700 people are waiting for a lifesaving transplant. Over 80% are waiting for a kidney – many on dialysis. Sadly, people will die waiting for that lifesaving gift so in my line of work, we are always looking for ways to inspire people to follow my daughter Kelly's lead. To that end, this bill presents a new opportunity to register additional organ donors, particularly males. Current data shows men sign up as donors at a far lower rate than women. To address this disparity, UW Organ and Tissue Donation created an initiative called *The Man Plan*, targeting our message to hunting and fishing shows, the trades, and other places where men work and play. When we spoke to men about why they weren't registered as donors, the common answer was either, "I don't know" or "I never thought of it" but they did not object to being donors.

Currently, there are two portals to register as a donor in Wisconsin – the DMV or online at [DonateLifeWisconsin.org](http://DonateLifeWisconsin.org). Almost all (98%) register with the DMV but because we only require a person renew their license every eight years, a great deal of time passes before drivers consider again if they are interested in being a donor. In contrast, AB578 touches on the option of organ donation every time someone seeks a hunting, fishing, or trapping license which might happen multiple times a year. This has the potential to significantly increase the number of donors.

In closing, I'd like to take a moment to applaud Rep. Thiesfeldt and his staff who went to great lengths to ensure AB578 is set up to **enhance** Wisconsin's donor program while respecting the current organ donation efforts already in place in Wisconsin. He allowed our clinical and legal experts to provide feedback on multiple occasions, which we believe helped craft a stronger bill. I would be remiss if I didn't thank him for taking this approach leading up to introduction of AB578.

Thank you for your time and attention and I hope you join me in supporting this legislation. I would be happy to entertain questions at this time.



## Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage

### *2021 Assembly Bill 578*

### *Electing to be a donor of an anatomical gift when applying for a hunting, fishing, or trapping license and making an appropriation*

*January 12, 2022*

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) welcomes the opportunity to provide written testimony on Assembly Bill 578 (AB 578), related to electing to be a donor of an anatomical gift when applying for a hunting, fishing, or trapping license and making an appropriation.

AB 578 requires the Department of Natural Resources to cooperate with the Department of Health Services' (DHS) organ donor registry and provide a resident who is at least 15 and ½ years of age or an emancipated minor, the opportunity to indicate their wish to be an organ donor when applying for a hunting, trapping or fishing license. AB 578 specifies that if a resident applicant answers the question regarding anatomical gifts in the affirmative, the DNR shall transmit to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) that authorization along with any other information about the applicant that the DHS determines to be necessary. This bill requires DOT to record a donor authorization received by DNR in the file of the person and if no file exists, requires DOT create a file.

AB 578 requires on an application for a hunting, fishing, or trapping license, the department provide a question as to whether the applicant wishes to include his or her name as a donor of an anatomical gift in the record of potential donors maintained by DOT. Under this bill, if an applicant indicates they wish to be a donor of an anatomical gift, the department is required to include on the applicant's hunting, fishing, or trapping license, a space for that indication. This bill also requires the back side of a conservation card be printed to serve as a record of gift, with a space for the card holder to indicate he or she wishes to be a donor. Furthermore, AB 578 requires the department provide a method by which the applicant may elect to receive a donor card that is separate from any license.

To implement the provisions of AB 578, the department must contract with the statewide license system vendor to build an interface with DOT to transmit donor information and update Go Wild. Required updates to Go Wild would include adding the required anatomical gift question and statements to the application-sales-process, modifying license output to accommodate statements and signatures, and developing a donor card printable on demand.

The conservation card must be redesigned to accommodate the required statements and signature line on the back. The conservation card is an optional card that allows DNR Law Enforcement direct access to the Go Wild customer account for the person named on the card. The conservation card may be carried in the field or on the waters as an acceptable form of proof for many hunting, fishing and trapping license types. The conservation card does not expire. The department has issued more than 500,000 total conservation cards to residents and nonresidents since it was first offered in March 2016.

The department offers a new conservation card design each year. The department contracts with a third-party vendor to produce and mail conservation cards as they are purchased. The vendor orders inventory for the year in advance and pre-prints the template on each card. As orders come in, the customer name, customer ID, and unique barcode are printed, and the card mailed. Currently by contract, the department is required to pay \$1.33 for each card that was not used. The timing of the required redesign could make the remaining inventory of pre-printed cards obsolete and increase implementation costs.

Further, to implement AB 578, the department must coordinate with DHS during the rule promulgation process, develop and provide training for staff and license agents, and develop informational materials for the hunting, fishing, and trapping public.

Finally, license agents are generally concerned about the amount of time required to sell a license and the amount of paper and toner they need to supply to complete license sales. The provisions of AB 578 add the requirement for license agents to include anatomical gift questions, statements, and capture applicant responses, which will add time to each sales transaction. Hunters and agents may feel inconvenienced by the additional questions posed at the point of sale and the increased length of time required to complete an application for a hunting, fishing, or trapping license. In addition, the provisions of this bill will necessitate additional printing to accommodate the required statements and provide space for signatures. License agents may be dissatisfied with the additional time and paper required for each transaction.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony. If you have questions or if there is any further information the department can provide, please feel free to contact Sean Kennedy, DNR Legislative Liaison, at [Seanp.Kennedy@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Seanp.Kennedy@Wisconsin.gov).