**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO MEMORIALIZE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT ORGAN TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON COVID‑19 VACCINATION STATUS.

Whereas, growing numbers of transplant programs across the country have chosen to either bar patients who refuse to take the widely available COVID vaccines from receiving transplants or to give them lower priority on crowded organ waitlists; and

Whereas, in South Carolina, patients awaiting or under evaluation for organ transplant at MUSC Health are now required to receive the COVID‑19 vaccine. Currently, there are 1,438 patients on the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) waitlist, of whom 1,397 have met the COVID vaccine requirement; and

Whereas, according to MUSC officials, of the 41 patients on the UNOS waitlist who are not currently meeting the COVID‑19 vaccine requirement, 18 are working toward complying, but the 23 who have indicated that they will not be vaccinated may be removed from the list; and

Whereas, in Massachusetts, a 31‑year old patient with a history of arrhythmia who was admitted to Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital this winter after suffering heart failure was struck from a waitlist for a heart transplant because he was not vaccinated against COVID‑19. Instead, the patient received a mechanical heart pump at the end of January, which should keep him alive for up to five years; and

Whereas, last October, a Colorado kidney transplant candidate with Stage V kidney disease at risk of dying without a transplant was bumped to inactive status by UCHealth for failing to get vaccinated against COVID‑19. Her case has become one of the most public examples of an argument roiling the country’s more than 250 organ transplant centers; and

Whereas, meanwhile, the practice is not uniform, as some hospitals do not require COVID vaccinations to approve candidates for the national waiting list, including Houston Methodist and Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas; and

Whereas, the varying policies and practices from community to community highlight a tense national divide, and the current patchwork approach, in the midst of an ever‑changing landscape of COVID‑related practices, underscores the need for Congress to take action to prohibit organ transplant recipient discrimination based on COVID‑19 vaccination status; and

Whereas, the General Assembly is already considering legislation in the House of Representatives (H4909) and Senate (S1037) to address the issue by prohibiting hospitals and insurance companies from discriminating against potential organ transplant recipients based on COVID‑19 vaccination status. However, it is incumbent on Congress to address the discrimination on a national scale. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, memorialize the United States Congress to enact legislation to prohibit organ transplant recipient discrimination based on COVID‑19 vaccination status.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to each member of the South Carolina Congressional Delegation.

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