

From the pen of Lion Lyle:

Lions All,

I wanted to bring you an update on where the eye bank legislation stands in the MN Senate and House:

1.) The Senate bill was introduced to the Senate floor on January 22, 2019 and the bill number is **SF 301**. This bill was authored by Senators Jerry Newton (DFL – primary author), John Hoffman (DFL) and Jim Abeler (R). The bill was assigned to the Senate committee on *Health and Human Services Finance & Policy*. On February 11th, two additional Senators were added to the bill as authors. They are Senators Scott Jensen (R – and a doctor) and Matt Klein (DFL). Both of these senators spoke with Dr. van Kuijk last week when he was at the state capitol as part of a contingent of physicians making the rounds visiting our elected officials. The bill is awaiting a committee hearing where it can be discussed, altered, and then voted on to either move it to another committee or back to the Senate floor for a formal vote. With 66 State Senators, we would need to have 34 votes in favor of the bill for passage. With five Senators authoring the bill, we need to convince 29 more to vote in favor for the bill to pass the full Senate.

2.) The House bill was introduced to the House floor this afternoon and the bill number is **HF 1247**. The bill was authored by State Representatives David Baker (R – primary author), Laurie Pryor (DFL), John Poston (R) and Kristin Robbins (R). We already have another state representative, Peggy Scott (R), who has asked to be added as a co-author and I'm attempting to recruit more. The bill was assigned to the House committee on Health and Human Services Policy. Now that the bill has been introduced, we are awaiting a scheduled committee hearing to go over the bill, make any necessary changes or additions, and then hold a vote on whether it should be moved to another committee or to the House floor for a formal vote. With 134 State Representatives, we would need to have 68 votes in favor of the bill for passage.

Dr. van Kuijk will be visiting the state capitol again this week as a part of another group of physicians visiting our state senators and representatives. As it was last week, Dr. van Kuijk is meeting to discuss other business but will make an attempt to drum up support for our proposed legislation, if time allows. It should be noted that Dr. van Kuijk's discussions with our elected officials regarding these eye bank bills are entirely done on his own time and he is not representing the University of Minnesota nor the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Neurosciences in any official capacity. He is only speaking about this legislation as a private citizen.

I have asked our bill sponsors in both the House & Senate to inform me when the committee hearings are scheduled and I am monitoring the committee hearing schedules on the legislative website. My plan is to attend the hearings and I plan to speak on behalf of the Lions and the Minnesota Lions Vision Foundation in favor of the bills. I feel there is much to be told about our request for this legislation. One thing I have been trying to emphasize with our elected officials is our foundation is not angry with LifeSource. Our foundation is disappointed in LifeSource bringing this for-profit entity known as CorneaGen to Minnesota.

We have been in discussions with LifeSource to find ways to work closer together in promoting donations by Minnesota residents. Sean has been meeting with Peter Farstad at LifeSource for several

months and now we are taking the next step by including me in the meetings. Sean and I will be visiting LifeSource tomorrow and our hope is the discussion will be cordial and productive.

The big thing we need from you, your fellow Lions and our supporters is to contact your state senators and representatives. Everyone needs to ask them to support the bills in their respective chambers (**SF 301** or **HF 1247**). Everyone needs to tell their elected officials that you support your local Lions-operated, non-profit eye bank and that you are against for-profit eye tissue sales. If you wish to secure a future for the Lions Gift of Sight, you need to get our state legislature to pass these bills!

Thank you for your attention to this lengthy, but important, e-mail!

Yours in Lionism,

Lion Lyle