

**The Honorable Pete Stark**  
**Extension of Remarks**  
**“Stephanie Tubbs Jones Gift of Life Medal Act of 2008”**  
**September 18, 2008**

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Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to introduce the “Stephanie Tubbs Jones Gift of Life Medal Act of 2008” with my colleague Mr. Camp of Michigan. Representative Tubbs Jones' life ended as she lived it; by exemplifying concern for the welfare of others. She donated her organs in the waning hours of her life so that the lives of others could continue. In that spirit, this legislation creates a commemorative medal for organ donors and their families, recognizing the brave and selfless act of organ donation.

As I well know from my time on the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, Representative Tubbs Jones worked tirelessly to remedy health disparities in our nation. Organ donation is one area where dramatic health disparities exist, which makes this all the more of a fitting tribute. While minorities donate organs in proportion to their population, the rate of organ donations fails to keep pace with the need for transplants in the population.

Minority populations account for close to 50% of the nearly 100,000 people who are currently waiting for organ transplants. Since the national transplant waiting list began, over 80,000 donation-eligible Americans have died waiting for an organ to become available; in 2007 alone, over 6,500 people died for lack of a suitable organ. Donating an organ to someone whose life depends on it is laudable, and it should be recognized and encouraged. The Stephanie Tubbs Jones Gift of Life Medal Act sends a clear message that donating one's organs is an act that should receive the profound respect of our nation.

I would like to thank Former Senate Majority Leader, and transplant surgeon, Dr. William H. Frist, for whom this bill was named in an earlier version in this Congress (H.R. 1765/S. 1062). Dr. Frist was a tireless advocate of organ donors and their families during his time in the

Senate. He worked on behalf of the Gift of Life Medal Act for years and has expressed strong support for renaming the bill for Representative Tubbs Jones. We appreciate his graciousness in doing so.

This legislation directs the Treasury department to design and produce a commemorative medal that the Department of Health and Human Services will award to organ donors or to a surviving family member. Enactment of this legislation would have no cost to the Federal Government. Funding for the medals would be self-sufficient through charitable donations.

This is non-controversial, non-partisan legislation to increase the rate of organ donation while honoring the life and service of our colleague, Representative Tubbs Jones. I ask my colleagues to help bring an end to transplant waiting lists and recognize the enormous courage displayed by organ donors and their families. This bill honors these brave acts, while publicizing the critical need for increased organ donation. I urge swift passage of the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Gift of Lift Medal Act.