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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

January 31, 2022

Mr. Brian Shepard
Chief Executive Officer
United Network for Organ Sharing
700 N 4th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Mr. Shepard,

We write to request the United Network for Organ Sharing take immediate action to modernize the national Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) information technology system and secure it from cyber-attacks. As you know, the Senate Finance Committee is conducting an investigation into the United States' organ transplant system, which includes, among other things, an examination of the security and technology issues surrounding the OPTN system. In light of our recent findings, we have no confidence in the security of this system.

Our staff recently obtained a briefing and report from the U.S. Digital Service (USDS), which assessed the organ donation matching system in 2020. According to USDS, the core OPTN system lacks several basic features and security systems such as sufficient back-up systems or cloud utilization.

A modern and reliable OPTN technology system is necessary to create better outcomes for people waiting for organ transplants, and ensure that security flaws don't lead to preventable deaths. As you are aware, UNOS is the sole operator of the OPTN system and maintains the waitlist for all organ transplant candidates in the United States. This means that any interruption in service—such as a ransomware attack, technical failure, or any inefficiency resulting in unnecessary delays—has the potential for lethal harm to patients across the country. Such a disruption has the potential to harm Americans on Medicare and Medicaid, particularly those suffering from kidney failure and receiving high-cost dialysis treatments. To that end, we urge UNOS to take immediate action to

protect the organ donation system and the lives that depend on it from cyber security threats.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance



Charles E. Grassley
Senator
Committee on Finance