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Chairwoman Kaiser, Vice-Chairman Washington, and members of the Committee:

I donated a kidney to Ellery Payton just eight months after coming home from my Army deployment in Iraq. This was an extremely difficult time in my life. I was dealing with PTSD, survivor's guilt, and depression after dealing with personal injuries and losing a number of soldiers stationed at my post. Thankfully, Ellery reached out to me at a time when I felt almost useless. I was trying to start a civilian career but was struggling to go from a combat zone to civilian life.

At first I thought Ellery's request was a joke since he reached out via Facebook but after a few messages I knew he was serious. The surgery preparation was seamless. I had a great hospital care team and staff. The problem, however, was that I had just started my first civilian job and was still living off my deployment saving. I was living in Wheaton, Maryland close to my job. I had no family here and only knew a few military friends and church members. I was almost forced to cancel my organ donation surgery because of the costs I was going to have to take on post-surgery. While I wanted to donate, I simply did not have the money that I knew would be needed to pay for everything during my recovery. As a result, the surgery was delayed for two months while I scapped money together from my church and local veteran's organizations. Even with the help, I paid everything I had in savings to sustain me through the process.

Being able to add those expenses to my tax returns as exemptions would have helped make the decision easier and would have helped me recoup some of the funds I had saved during deployment to help with a fresh start, but instead spent to help with Ellery's new life.

I do not regret any part of becoming a living donor— it's one of the best, most inspiring moments in my life; Ellery gave me a chance to give life after seeing so many lives lost throughout my military career. After surgery, I've been able to help two other people — including my godfather — with kidney failure by advocating for and receiving a kidney from a living donor.

Living donors get to experience humanity at its best. We get to help people live and contribute to our communities. These tax breaks will help ease financial commitments for those willing to save lives through donation. Thank you for your consideration.