

From: Press Office
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ORGAN DONATION

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GOVERNOR SIGNS SERIES OF BILLS ENCOURAGING ORGAN DONATION
Countless Additional New Yorkers to Receive the "Gift
of Life"

Governor George E. Pataki today announced he has signed into law a series of bills that will encourage organ and tissue donation in New York State, ensuring that countless additional New Yorkers receive the "Gift of Life."

"While we have made great strides in recent years, thousands of Americans still wait for the life saving help that many times simply is not available," Governor Pataki said. "That's why it is literally vital that we continue to encourage New Yorkers to consider becoming an organ donor. On behalf of New Yorkers like Willie Brodsky, that's why I am pleased to sign these bills that help advance that goal into law."

Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno said, "Organ donation is a difficult decision but can be tremendously rewarding because it can save someone's life. These new laws are critically important to educate people about organ donation and encourage people to make that decision. I applaud the Governor for signing these bills into law, as well as the bill sponsors, Senators Kemp Hannon, Nicholas Spano, Joe Robach and John Bonacic."

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said, "Everyday thousands of desperate New Yorkers wait for the phone to ring with news of an available kidney, liver, heart or lung. This legislative package will go a long way in calling attention to the dire need for donated organs and will result in a greater number of New Yorkers choosing to make this ultimate, lifesaving gift. I applaud all the members of the Assembly who worked to bring about these laws, especially Richard Brodsky and Sam Hoyt."

"I want to thank the Governor, Speaker, Majority Leader and every member of the Legislature who listened to us and helped save thousands of families' lives. It's a very big day for families across New York," said Willie Brodsky, daughter of Assemblyman Richard Brodsky and recent transplant recipient.

"I agree with Willie," said Assemblyman Richard Brodsky.

The bills include:

- A3995(Cahill)/S8281(Bonacic) - Requires a driver's license or renewal to prominently display the words "Organ Donor" in cases where the person has consented to donate.
- A4294-A(Hoyt)/S4610-A(Hannon) - Requires a license application or renewal form to include a box for a voluntary one dollar donation to the "Life Pass It On" Fund.
- A9902-B(Latimer)/S8312(Spano) - Requires the Department of Health to inform New Yorkers about the need and importance of organ and tissue donation through Health Care and Wellness Education and Outreach Program.
- A11842(Brodsky)/S8256(Spano) - Directs the Transplant Council to issue a report on the issues surrounding presumed consent for organ donation, with a focus on "presumed consent" systems set forth in other nations. In a system of presumed consent, the person is presumed to consent to donation unless he or she specifies otherwise.
- A11883(Schimminger)/S8379(Robach) - Transforms the New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry to one of intent to one of consent.

· A11887 (Conte) / S8465 (Robach) - Renames the New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry to the "Donate Life" Registry to further encourage organ and tissue donation.

· A3072 (Hoyt) / S759 (Hannon) - Provides up to \$10,000 subtracted from federal adjusted gross income for certain unreimbursed expenses incurred by living organ donor, including travel, lodging or lost wages.

The Governor and Legislature created the State's Organ and Tissue Donor Registry in June 2000 to afford individuals the ability to donate their organs and tissues for medical use. The bills signed by the Governor today will bolster public awareness about the critical importance and demand for organ and tissue donation, and dramatically increase the number of potential donors across the State.

Elaine Berg, President and CEO of The New York Organ Donor Network said, "There are over 93,000 people desperately waiting for organ transplants in the United States, about 7,000 of them are right here in the greater New York area. While more needs to be done, this is a significant milestone in New York. By making this legislation into law, many New Yorkers' names will be removed from the waiting list because they received the gift of life."

Recent statistics show that there are more than 87,000 people on organ transplant waiting lists in the United States, including more than 8,000 New Yorkers. Additionally, there are tens of thousands in need of tissue transplants. In 2004, there were approximately 14,000 organ donors allowing for more than 27,000 organ transplants to be performed in the United States. Despite this positive development in the organ and tissue transplant arena, the number of patients who have died while waiting for a transplant has tripled during the past decade.

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