



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Jesse White Unveils Ad Campaign To Kick Off Donate Life! Organ and Tissue Donor Month *Doesn't Matter What Your Differences Are --Encourages Everyone To Join Registry*

Secretary of State Jesse White encouraged all Illinoisans to join the state's new organ and tissue donor registry following the unveiling of an ad campaign that reminds people no matter what their basic differences are -- almost everyone can sign up to give the gift of life.

April is National Donate Life! Month. Organizations will be working together to promote organ and tissue donor awareness throughout the state.

"The commercial lets us know that it doesn't matter who you are --almost everyone can become an organ and tissue donor," White said. "It really highlights how people are basically the same when it comes to donation. Many have received a second chance at life because of the generous spirit of another despite differences in age, race or gender. "

Television and radio ads, featuring nine Illinoisans who are recipients or from donor families, will air in cities and towns across the state encouraging people to help by becoming an organ/tissue donor. This year's television spot features the song, *Join Together* by The Who.

Although almost two million people have signed up for the new registry, approximately 4,500 people in Illinois are on waiting lists for an organ transplant.

White is encouraging Illinoisans to sign up to ensure their decision to donate organs and tissue is honored following their deaths. Due to a new law implemented last year, a person's decision to donate is now legally binding. Previously, the decision remained with the person's family. Donors who registered before Jan. 1, 2006, need to re-register with the Secretary of State's office to guarantee that their wishes to donate are fulfilled.

To join the new registry, Illinoisans can register by going to www.LifeGoesOn.com, visit any Illinois state driver's license facility, or call the Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program at 1-800-210-2106.

White will attend events planned in communities throughout Illinois to encourage donation.

"Public awareness is crucial with organ and tissue donation," said Jarold Anderson, President/CEO of Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network. "We commend campaigns such as this one launched by Secretary White. These efforts have made and continue to make a tremendous impact in our efforts here in Illinois to save and improve the lives of as many people as possible."

"Mid-America Transplant Services (MTS) is privileged to work with the Illinois Secretary of State's Organ Donor Program to help increase awareness across the state of Illinois," said Brian Bush of MTS.