

Jesse White Announces a New Organ/Tissue Donation Campaign; Featuring Recipients Whose Lives Were Saved Due to Organ/Tissue Donation
PSA Features Chicago Cubs World Series Win and Song by Five for Fighting

Secretary of State Jesse White announces a new ad campaign today featuring three recipients whose lives were saved because of the gift of organ/tissue donation.

“What if?” is the theme of the commercial,” White explained. “All of the organ recipients illustrate scenarios in which “What if” their donation had not occurred and how their lives would have been greatly affected. In this commercial, we see three scenes that would have played out very differently without organ donation. There would have been potentially tragic results. The message is meaningful because organ/tissue donation gave them the gift of being here today.”

The first scenario features Jose Bentancourt and his daughter Jennifer Wojcik. Without a kidney transplant, Betancourt could have missed his daughter Jennifer’s wedding. In the second scenario, Micaela Prunty might have missed her first prom had she not received a liver transplant. And in the third, without a heart transplant, Gwendolyn Westlund could have missed the Chicago Cubs winning the World Series. What if they had not received the donations they needed to continue living their life? The PSA encourages others to register to end the question of “What if?”

The commercial also features the Cubs game-ending play that earned them the 2016 World Series Championship. The song *What If* by Five for Fighting’s John Ondrasik was donated and is featured in the spot.

April is National Donate Life Month. White will attend events throughout Illinois to encourage donation. Organizations will be working together to promote donor awareness throughout the state. Television and radio ads will air in English and Spanish statewide throughout the month. The spot will also be played on more than 450 movie screens throughout the state.

Currently, there are more than 6.1 million people registered to become organ/tissue donors in Illinois. However, approximately 4,700 people are on the waiting list and about 300 die each year waiting for an organ transplant.

In February, White initiated legislation that would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to register for the state’s First Person Consent Organ/Tissue Donor Registry when they receive their driver’s license or identification card. White introduced legislation in both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly.

“We encourage Illinoisans to join the Secretary of State’s Organ and Tissue Donor Registry,” said White. “One person can improve the quality of life for up to 25 people.”

Illinoisans can register with the Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program at LifeGoesOn.com, 1-800-210-2106 or by visiting their local Driver Services facility.

During this month, libraries are distributing organ/tissue donor materials and hosting donor drives. Health fairs, schools, colleges and hospitals will also be hosting donor drives and featuring displays statewide.

To access the video in English, visit <https://vimeo.com/user10837448/review/210259525/fb41650ff3> and in Spanish, go to <https://vimeo.com/user10837448/review/210258601/07b6661357>