



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

For Immediate Release:
March 9, 2005

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Illinois House of Representatives Approves First-Person Consent Organ & Tissue Donor Bill

Springfield—Secretary of State Jesse White applauded the Illinois House of Representatives for approving his initiative to create a First-Person Consent Organ and Tissue Donor Registry in Illinois that would make a person's decision to donate organs and tissue following their death a binding decision.

While Illinois has the largest donor registry in the country with more than six million participants, organs and tissue may not be donated unless the registrant's next of kin gives consent.

"I want to thank the members of the Illinois House of Representatives for approving a measure that will save additional lives every year," White said. "Although six million people in Illinois have joined our organ and tissue donor registry, their wishes are sometimes not carried through. This measure would make a person's decision to donate organs and tissue binding under state law. It will also make more life-saving organs available for transplant each year."

The General Assembly created a legislative task force last year to serve under the direction of White's office to study the issue of first-person consent. State Rep. Kathy Ryg (D-Vernon Hills) is the chief sponsor of White's measure (House Bill 1077) to create the new first-person consent registry. Similar legislation has been approved in 42 other states.

According to Gift of Hope, an organ and tissue procurement organization covering much of Illinois, 40 percent of families say no to organ donation when approached for permission. Families also say no 19 percent of the time even when notified their loved one had joined the state's donor registry. Gift of Hope estimates that a first person consent law could save at least 100 additional lives each year. One donor can save or enhance the lives of more than 25 people.

Although Illinois has the largest donor registry in the country, approximately 300 people in the state die each year waiting for a transplant. Nationally, there are 87,000 people waiting for transplant operations – nearly 5,000 of them in Illinois. Every 13 minutes a new person is added to the national waiting list and 17 people across the country die each day waiting for a transplant.

The legislation now moves to the Illinois Senate for consideration.

To become an organ or tissue donor:

- Sign the back of your Illinois driver's license or ID card right on the plastic and have it witnessed by two people.
- Discuss the issue with your family because donation cannot occur without next-of-kin consent.
- Join the state registry. If you agree to be a donor when you visit a driver's facility you will automatically be listed in our Organ Donor Registry. You can also join by calling 1-800-210-2106 or via the Internet (<http://www.cyberdriveillinois.net>).