



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

Senator Breslin: Lauren's Law Passes the Senate / Bill Will Increase Likelihood of Life Saving Organ Donations

NEIL D. BRESLIN April 13, 2011

(Albany, NY) New York is one step closer to getting a boost in the number of life saving organ donors listed on the New York State Organ and Tissue Registry, Senator Neil D. Breslin (D-Delmar) has announced. The State Senate has passed Lauren's Law, legislation (S.3885) making it mandatory for individuals who apply for a New York State Drivers License to complete the section of the application as it pertains to the organ donor registry.

Often overlooked now, this legislation requires applicants to check the box for either "yes" or "not at this time" under the organ donor registry section of the application. If an applicant forgets, which is often the case, a clerk will remind them of the need to complete that section of their application.

"Giving the gift of life is probably the most humane act anyone could perform," said Senator Breslin. "Lauren's Law will help bolster the number of organ donors, and fewer people will die as a result of being put on an extensive waiting list. This effort comes from the work of a brave 10-year old who recently received a heart transplant. I applaud my colleagues in the Senate for voting unanimously for this life-saving legislation."

The new bill is named after 10 year-old Lauren Shields from Nyack who successfully received a new heart from an organ donor. Lauren was placed on an organ transplant waiting list when her heart began to fail at 7 years old. Doctors put her on cardiac and respiratory life support, until she was able to receive a new heart.

According to the New York State Organ Donor Network, New York State currently has the lowest Donor Designation Rate (DDR) in the United States. In total, only 11 percent of eligible donors are currently enrolled in The New York State Organ and Tissue Registry.

This number starkly contrasts to the national average of 43 percent. In some states, such as Utah and Iowa, the DDR ranges between 65-70 percent. Lauren's Law will create a new model for organ and tissue donation that is aimed at significantly increasing that percentage while taking into consideration all of a person's individual rights to decline enrollment into the program.

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