



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Senator Carlucci Announces Passage of Lauren's Law

DAVID CARLUCCI June 22, 2012

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*Passed in Senate and Assembly, Bill Now Moves to Governor Cuomo's Desk*

**NANUET, NY** – Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Orange) today announced the historic passage of Lauren's Law (S.7103A), the first of its kind law in New York State that will save lives and increase the enrollment of organ donation.

Joined by 12 year-old Stony Point resident Lauren Shields, the heart transplant recipient for whom the law is named after, as well as organ donation advocacy groups that pushed for

passage of the bill, declared victory as the bill now heads its way over to Governor Cuomo's desk to be signed into law.

Over the past two years, Lauren Shields, has become the face of New York State's campaign to raise awareness about the need to drastically increase the number of organ and tissue donors.

"Lauren's Law will save lives and increase the state's enrollment for organ donation," **said Senator Carlucci**. "By making this simple change to our laws, we can implement what has successfully been accomplished in other states. With over 10,000 people right now in waiting for a life-saving organ donation, this legislation now makes it easier for donors to sign up and give the gift of life."

New York lags far behind the national average when it comes to the amount of people enrolled in the organ donor program, and ultimately save people's lives. 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% of eligible donors are currently enrolled in the New York State Organ and Tissue Registry.

An overwhelming majority of people who do enroll actually do so through the Department of Motor Vehicles when applying for a drivers license or a non-driver ID.

"As a kid it's an overwhelming feeling to have a law named after you that will soon be signed by the Governor," **said Lauren Shields**. "A bill becoming law was something that I had only read about in text books at school but the reason behind it was so real to me. I never want anyone to have to wait for transplant like I did."

"We commend the tremendous efforts of the New York State Legislature to pass this life-saving legislation," **said Helen Irving, President and CEO of the New York Organ Donor Network**.

“We are thrilled that New York is making great strides towards increasing the number of New Yorkers enrolled to be organ donors and increasing the number of lives that are saved with organ transplants across the state each year.”

Lauren's Law will dramatically increase the number of individuals in the organ donor program through common sense changes to New York’s public health law, and the vehicle and traffic law. The bill will ensure that individuals who apply for a New York State Drivers License or Learner Permit must complete the section of the application as it pertains to the organ donor registry.

The applicant must answer the question, “Would you like to be added to the Donate Life registry,” and subsequently check the box for either “yes” or “skip this question” under the organ donor registry section of the application.

The bill will require the Commissioner of Health to ensure that there is space provided on any consent application, including a(n):

- ü Application or renewal from of a license
- ü Non-driver identification card application or renewal
- ü Renewal form to register or decline registration in the donate life registry

The Commissioner does not have to maintain records of any person who checks “skip this question.” Failure to check a box will not impair the validity of the application and failure to check “yes” or checking “skip this question” will not be interpreted as a wish not to donate.

“We want to especially thank Senator David Carlucci and Assemblyman Felix Ortiz for sponsoring this bill,” **said Ted Lawson, President and Executive Director of Save Lives Now New York Foundation.**

The bill also amends the public health law requiring that when an anatomical gift is made, the donor shall indicate that the donor has no knowledge of contrary intentions by the decedent and is not contrary to the decedent's religious beliefs.

While there are more than 10,000 New Yorkers waiting for an organ transplant, last year there were only 929 donations made. Tragically, 577 New Yorkers died last year while on the transplant waiting list. New Yorkers have to wait longer for a transplant than recipients in other states because of the low number of registered donors. Nationwide, 42% of the population is registered as organ donors, compared to only 18% in New York State.

Lauren's Law takes effect one year after it is signed into law.

**Assemblyman Richard Gottfried (D-Manhattan), who voted for Lauren's Law in the Assembly, said**, "It's shocking that New York State has one of the lowest rates of organ donation in America," said Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried, chair of the Assembly Health Committee, who is registered with the New York organ donor registry. "The Ortiz-Carlucci bill can be a simple and effective way to get more of us into the organ donor registry and save thousands of lives a year. A big 'thank you' to Lauren Shields for helping lead the way."

**Jeanne Shields, mother of Lauren Shields, said**, "Our family is so grateful to all those that supported Lauren's Law over the last 14 months, especially Senator Carlucci & Assemblyman Ortiz. We were in awe of how many people became involved in the effort after hearing Lauren's Story. While we know that the Law will increase the number of registered donors in New York, as a family will continue to work on increasing awareness on this important issue that is so near to our hearts."

**Janet Ocasio, Co-President, Transplant Support Organization, said**, "The transplant community and my organization, the Transplant Support Organization, is extremely grateful to Senator Carlucci and to all of the thoughtful and brave people who worked so hard and consistently

to insure the passage of Lauren's Law. This bill represents the lives and future of thousands of New Yorkers who wait silently for a life saving organ transplant, and who pray that they will not become one of the 18 people who die every day waiting. I applaud the courage of all of the advocates who stayed with Lauren's Law and who did not allow themselves to be distracted by this important mission."

For more information on the successful campaign to pass Lauren's Law, please visit:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_HPIk\\_sMJwQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HPIk_sMJwQ)

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