



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Extension of 'Lauren's Law' signed into law as part of ongoing effort to boost organ donations ~ O'Mara co-sponsors new law, calls it important life-saving initiative

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 26, 2016

| ISSUE: **ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION**



Albany, N.Y., July 26—Legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to extend an important state law first enacted four years ago aimed at increasing organ and tissue donations in New York State has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

“Encouraging organ and tissue donations is one of the most important life-saving actions that we can take in New York State. Lauren’s Law has been and will continue to be an important part of this ongoing effort,” said O’Mara, who said that the Senate first approved the legislation in February.

The new law (**S6228/A8594, Chapter 174 of the Laws of 2016**) enacts a four-year extension of what’s known as “Lauren’s Law” in honor of 12-year-old heart transplant survivor Lauren Shields of Stony Point, New York (Rockland County). Lauren received her heart transplant in 2009. She and her family were leading advocates for the law’s initial enactment in 2012 and were again at the Capitol this year pushing for its extension. The law was set to expire this October.

Lauren’s Law prohibits a driver's license application from being processed unless the organ donation section is filled out. Applicants have to check a box stating “yes” or “skip this question.” Prior to the law’s enactment, filling out the organ donation section on the application was optional.

According to LiveOnNy (<http://liveonny.org/>), formerly the New York Organ Donor Network, over 10,000 people are waiting for organ transplants in New York State and another name is added to the state's organ transplant waiting list every 2½ hours.

Supporters of the legislation project that the law's extension will result in 560,000 new organ donor registrants over the next four years.

O’Mara also co-sponsored legislation (**S6528/A8661**) this year, which was approved by the Senate in May, which would have made “Lauren’s Law” permanent. That legislation remains in the Assembly Health Committee and O’Mara said he would continue to push for its enactment.

