



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Senate unanimously approves legislation making 'Lauren's Law' permanent as part of ongoing effort to boost organ and tissue donation in New York State

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 1, 2017

| ISSUE: **ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION**



**Give thanks. Give life.**

Encouraging organ and tissue donation is one of the most important life-saving actions that we can take in New York State.

**Albany, N.Y., March 1**—The State Senate today unanimously approved legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to make permanent an important state law first enacted five years ago to increase organ and tissue donations in New York State.

“Encouraging organ and tissue donation is one of the most important life-saving actions that we can take in New York State. Lauren’s Law has been and should always be an important part of this ongoing effort,” said O’Mara.

The legislation (**S1206/A5179**) would make permanent 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 are advocating for it to become a permanent part of state law. A new law approved last year extends Lauren’s Law for four years until 2020.

The law prohibits the processing of a state driver's license application until the organ donation section is completed. Applicants have to check a box stating “yes” or “skip this question.” Prior to the enactment of “Lauren’s Law,” 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 awaiting organ transplants in New York and another name is added to the state's organ transplant waiting list every 2½ hours.

Assemblyman Felix Ortiz (D-Brooklyn) sponsors the bipartisan legislation in the Assembly. It must be approved by the Assembly and signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo before becoming law.

**A new law O’Mara co-sponsored last year took effect earlier this month, in conjunction with National Organ Donor Day,** to help increase the number of organ and tissue donors by lowering the age of consent for New Yorkers who choose to become a donor. Prior to the law’s enactment, New York was one of only four states in the nation requiring an individual to be 18 or older to enroll in an organ and tissue donor registry. The new law gives New

Yorkers aged 16 or older who wish to consent to donation the ability to enroll in the state's Donate Life Registry.