



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

Jacobs Announces Passage of Organ Donor Registration Law

SENATOR JACOBS May 2, 2017

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(Albany, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60th SD) announced the unanimous passage today of a bill he sponsored (S5283B) to significantly increase the number of registered organ donors in New York State. April was National Donate Life Month, and Jacobs' bill was one of a package of organ donation bills approved by the full Senate on the heels of a last month's activities and programs aimed at raising awareness and support for the organ donor movement.

“Right now the primary vehicles for registering for organ donation are through the Department of Health, Department of Motor Vehicles or the Board of Elections. Unfortunately, a significant portion of New York City residents don’t drive and too many other residents statewide don’t vote so they have no interaction with the Board of Elections,” said Senator Jacobs. “Our hope is that through my legislation, more people, particularly younger generations, will get exposed to the concept of organ donation earlier in life and sign up for this life saving cause,” Jacobs added.

Under the legislation that was approved, access to organ donor registration will be enhanced by including a ‘Check-Yes’ box on SUNY and CUNY applications as well as on Library card applications. The legislation also has a provision that amends existing law to include the SUNY Board of Regents in the interagency work group to enhance the donate life registry.

There are approximately 10,000 people currently waiting for organ transplants across the state, making New York the third highest state in the nation in need for donors. At the same time, New York has the second lowest percentage of registered donors of any state in the country. It is estimated that each year, 500 men, women and children in New York die because of the shortage of donors.

“These statistics are a sad irony in a state with a population as large as New York’s, a state whose people are as compassionate and courageous, and a state that is so progressive and on the cutting edge in medical advancements and quality of care,” said Jacobs.

In addition to sponsoring this legislation, Jacobs was a supporter of, and advocate for, the more than \$1.6 million included in the 2017-2018 state budget to promote and educate people about organ, eye and tissue donation. With additional funding and greater outreach, the Senator said he believes New York State can vastly improve in its life saving organ donor registry efforts.

“The New York State Library system serves over 19 million people statewide, the SUNY system serves 1.3 million and the CUNY system 500,000 people annually,” said Jacobs. “With the passage of my legislation today, that is a captive audience of over 20 million people that we will now have the opportunity to target our donate life message to,” the Senator concluded.