



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara co-sponsors new state law making 'Lauren's Law' permanent as effort to boost organ donations

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 17, 2017

| ISSUE: **ORGAN 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., October 16**—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 has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

“Encouraging organ and tissue donation is one of the most important life-saving actions that we can take in New York State. I’m extremely pleased that Lauren’s Law will now permanently be an important part of this ongoing effort,” said O’Mara.

The measure (**S1206/A5179, Chapter 332 of the Laws of 2017**) makes 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.

A new law O’Mara co-sponsored last year took effect earlier this year 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.

Read the full announcement of this and other actions **HERE**.