



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Saving Lives Through Organ Donation

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE April 6, 2018

| ISSUE: **ORGAN DONATION**



Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

I will never forget the day my father got the call. In need of a new kidney, a match from a donor had been found. It was one of the happiest moments my family has ever shared. After a successful transplant, my father's improved quality of life, and my family's ability to enjoy it, has meant the world to all of us. Every single day we count our blessings that someone gave my father the most precious gift possible.

Currently, there are 121,000 people across the country on the organ transplant waiting list and there are more names added to it every day. Unfortunately, that wait results in thousands of deaths a year. That is why this month, National Donate Life Month, has become so critically important.

First recognized in April of 2003, National Donate Life Month is the time when organizations host local and national events to help raise awareness of the need for organ and tissue donation, to encourage Americans to register as a donor and perhaps save a life.

Organ donation is one of the most selfless decisions a person can choose to make, and in doing so, can save up to eight lives. This awareness effort attempts to reach people of all ages, races and medical histories to let them know that they can save the next life by simply donating.

That same donor can help up to 75 more people by donating tissue. Tissue can restore eyesight, help fight infections in burn patients and prevent the loss of mobility.

To support organ donation, I recently introduced legislation that would direct coroners and medical examiners throughout New York State to verify if an individual is on donor registry and if so, determine if they are able to donate. I also fought to ensure New York State's newly finalized budget included \$2.5 million dollars to support organ donation.

In addition, I also supported a law that allows 16 and 17 year olds to become donors by enrolling in the registry when applying for a driver license, learner permit or non-driver ID, potentially increasing enrollments in New York by thousands.

During National Donate Life Month, I hope you will consider enrolling in the [Donate Life New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry](#). Together, New Yorkers can save lives.