



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

## Statement From Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan

JOHN J. FLANAGAN October 16, 2018

| ISSUE: **ORGAN DONATION, ASSEMBLYMAN JAMES CONTE**



Six years ago today, our state lost a true public servant with the passing of my dear friend Assemblyman James Conte. Jim was the epitome of an elected official whose dedication was second-to-none and our thoughts are with his family on this difficult day.

A two-time kidney recipient, Jim knew firsthand the impact that organ donation could have and how it provided him more time with his beloved family. My hope is that they may find comfort in the fact that Jim's impact is still being felt today, as he has inspired a number of former colleagues, led by Senate Health Committee Chairman Kemp Hannon and myself,

who carry on his legacy of fighting to increase awareness of organ donation.

Together, we have fought to deliver legislation to build upon the \$2.5 million that we included in the budget to support organ and tissue donation. We are also all working to raise the number of registered donors in our state and, thankfully, those efforts are beginning to pay dividends as the enrollment in the New York State Donate Life Registry has increased by 430,000 from last year, with an anticipated 600,000 new enrollees by the end of the year. That is an outstanding increase of about 12 percent from 2017 and we are hopeful that Jim would be proud of those numbers.

While the progress is encouraging, there are still 9,400 New Yorkers awaiting a life-saving organ transplant – making up about 10 percent of UNOS's national organ transplant waiting list – and we need to keep fighting to help them. One organ donor can save up to eight lives and we are asking those who are not yet registered to use the anniversary of Jim's passing as an inspiration to sign up today.

Anyone interested in becoming an organ donor should visit <http://www.liveonny.org/> to join the effort.

Thank you to all who are standing up to register and to Jim for leading the way on this important fight.