



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Announces Senate Hearing Investigating Organ Transplants to Prison Inmates

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO April 27, 2011

| ISSUE: **CRIME**

New York State Senate Crime Victims Crime & Correction Committee Chairman Mike Nozzolio has announced a special Senate hearing to examine the policies that allocate organ transplants to State prison inmates at taxpayers' expense.

The hearing is in response to recent reports that a convicted rapist serving up to 40 years in prison is being evaluated for a possible heart transplant at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, even as there are 49 other people on the waiting list for a new heart at the hospital. It is reported a heart transplant costs approximately \$800,000.

“These reports raise a multitude of questions that demand and deserve answers for New York taxpayers, potential organ donors, and law-abiding families who are still waiting for life-saving transplants,” said Senator Nozzolio. “We cannot allow law abiding citizens to be denied transplants in favor of dangerous violent offenders, convicted of heinous crimes, who may never leave prison. It is essential that the public is provided a clear and complete understanding of the current State and Federal policies and guidelines for organ transplants.”

Currently, the United States organ transplant system is managed by a private, non-profit organization called the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) under contract with the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Representatives from the United Network for Organ Sharing, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the New York State Department of Health, organ donation and transplant organizations across the State, and the New York State Department of

Corrections will be asked to testify at the hearing.

“We must examine the allocation process for organ transplants at every level to find out how this individual, and possibly others who committed horrific crimes, are able to receive these critical medical benefits, at enormous cost to the taxpayers, in potentially higher priority than others who have not broken any laws. Our law abiding, taxpaying citizens deserve this review,” said Senator Nozzolio.

The hearing will be scheduled in Albany with the exact date and times to be determined.