



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

State Senate Unanimously Votes to Make Lauren's Law Permanent

DAVID CARLUCCI April 19, 2016



Albany, NY - Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) announced on April 11th that the Senate has passed his bill to permanently extend Lauren's Law. Lauren's Law, first passed in 2012, has worked to increase the number of eligible organ donors in New York. The law is named after Rockland County native Lauren Shields, who at the age of 7 waited over a month to receive her lifesaving heart transplant.

New York State has a historically low performing registry in terms of our state's donor designation share. Designated donors are classified as a percentage of a state's population

that are age 18 and older and therefore eligible to be organ donors.

According to the New York Alliance for Donation, while the national average of designated donors is approximately 52%, only 25% of New Yorkers have joined the New York State Donate Life Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, placing it in 51st place out of the 52 registries in the United States, which includes Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. What makes matters worse is that New York has the third longest list of patients waiting to receive an organ donation. As a result, every 16 hours one New Yorker dies waiting for an organ transplant.

The majority of New Yorkers who join the donor registry do so through the state's Department of Motor Vehicles. However, historically, only about ten percent of individuals completing a donation-relevant transaction completed the donor designation section on the DMV form. When signed into law in 2012, Lauren's Law mandated that the question which asked if an individual would like to sign up as an organ donor be answered on the DMV form, by selecting either "yes" or "skip this question."

Prior to the enactment of Lauren's Law, New York had a donor designation rate of less than 11% of the population as organ donors. However, since Lauren's Law was fully implemented in November 2015, the donor designation rate has increased to 17%, the highest rates ever seen in New York State.

On February 24th, 2016, the Senate voted to extend Lauren's Law by four years. With today's vote, this ensures that New Yorkers who complete a relevant DMV transaction continue to be made aware of the opportunity to save lives through organ and tissue donation. License renewals at the DMV are anticipated to grow from approximately 800,000 this year to nearly 2 million individuals a year for the next four years, meaning we can expect tens of thousands of New Yorkers to check that "yes" box to enroll as an organ donor.

“Allowing Lauren’s Law to sunset would be a major setback, putting the lives of the thousands of men, women and children who are waiting for a life-saving transplant in jeopardy. This is a setback that we as New Yorkers could not afford. With today’s vote to make Lauren’s Law permanent, this will increase eligible donors and expand our state’s registry. I truly want to thank the namesake for this bill, Lauren Shields, for her tireless advocacy and inspirational message of hope. I am so proud to work with her and advocates across New York who made this possible. Now this bill moves to the Assembly, where I urge my colleagues to support it,” **said Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester).**

“I am enormously grateful for the support and dedication Senator Carlucci, the New York State Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo have given to the issue of organ and tissue donation. The journey to an organ transplant is long, and other families should not have to go through this struggle. Each individual donor is crucial. We believe Lauren’s Law provides that important opportunity for New Yorkers to help save a life. Lauren and I could not be more thankful to all those who helped make Lauren’s Law permanent,” **said Lauren’s mother, Jeanne Shields.**

“Lauren’s law is a vitally important tool -- ensures New Yorkers know about the organ donor registry and also presents them with the opportunity to save a life by enrolling as an organ donor. Lauren, the law’s namesake, is an extraordinary example of how organ donation can save a life and making Lauren’s Law permanent will ensure tens of thousands of New Yorkers receive organ transplants without delay,” **said Senator Kemp Hannon (R-Nassau), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health.**

“The New York Alliance for Donation is delighted that the New York State Senate passed a permanent extension of Lauren’s Law. We thank Senator David Carlucci, and the entire Senate, for ensuring the small step our state has taken to increase the number of individuals enrolling in the New York State Donate Life Registry is not lost. As a result of Lauren’s Law,

New York saw an additional 50,000 people check “yes” to signing up as an organ and tissue donor. There are thousands of men, women and children whose lives depend on us ‘staying the course’ and making sure the positive results we are seeing from Lauren’s Law continue. We believe the extension of Lauren’s Law is crucial to turning around the New York State Donate Life Registry’s poor performance, and saving the lives of New Yorkers,” **stated Aisha Tator, Executive Director of the New York Alliance for Donation.**

“I am tremendously thankful to Senator Carlucci and Lauren Shields for helping get more organ donors registered in New York through Lauren’s Law. The more donor registrants we have, the greater the potential to save more lives,” **said Roxanne Watson, Organ Donor Advocate and Heart Transplant Recipient.**