

For Immediate Release:
April 5, 2016

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Jesse White Kicks Off Organ/Tissue Donation Campaign
Focus on encouraging registration at Driver Services facilities

Secretary of State Jesse White kicked off the state's organ/tissue donor campaign today as part of a statewide effort to encourage registration and awareness at all 138 Driver Services facilities.

"Since many registrations happen at our facilities, we want to be sure that people are informed when making the decision to give the gift of life," said White. "There are many myths that make some people fearful about donation and we want to dispel those concerns."

During the campaign organ/tissue donor staff will be on-site at a number of facilities to answer questions regarding donation. Countertop displays of local recipients and donor families will be featured at various Driver Services facilities so that patrons can see how organ/tissue donation impacts their community. In addition, facility personnel will receive additional training on organ/tissue donation in order to discuss registration with patrons.

April is National Donate Life Month. White will attend events at facilities, hospitals and other venues throughout Illinois to encourage donation. Organizations will be working together to promote donor awareness throughout the state.

Currently, there are more than 5.9 million people registered to become organ/tissue donors in Illinois. However, more than 5,000 are on the waiting list and about 300 people die each year waiting for an organ transplant.

White held a press conference at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. In attendance were 7-year-olds Luke and Jake Swanson whose lives were saved because of organ donors. In addition, Secretary of State employee Patrice Austin-Geiger a two-time kidney recipient and 14-year-old heart recipient Nicholas Lindblad spoke about how organ donation impacted their lives.

"We encourage Illinoisans to join the Secretary of State's Organ and Tissue Donor Registry," said White. "It takes less than a minute and one person can improve the quality of life for up to 25 people."

Illinoisans can register with the Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program at LifeGoesOn.com, 1-800-210-2106 or by visiting their local Driver Services facility.

This month Driver Services facilities will be distributing organ/tissue donor materials and hosting donor drives. Health fairs, schools, colleges and hospitals will also be hosting donor drives and featuring displays statewide. In addition, television and radio ads about organ/tissue donation will air in English and Spanish statewide throughout the month. The spot will also be shown in more than 400 theaters across the state.

Donate Life Illinois partners include the American Liver Foundation-Illinois, Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network; Eversight; Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program; LifeSource; Mid-America Transplant Services; Rock River Valley Blood Center; and National Kidney Foundation of Illinois.

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 LifeGoesOn.com