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For More Information Contact:
Beth Kaufman

Jesse White Hosts Religious Leaders to Recognize National Donor Sabbath
Unveils PSA featuring pastor who gave parishioner a kidney

Today Secretary of State Jesse White hosted religious leaders, including a pastor who gave a parishioner his kidney, to unveil a new radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) highlighting the need for organ and tissue donors. This Friday marks the beginning of National Donor Sabbath, an interfaith campaign aimed at educating religious communities about organ/tissue donation.

“We recognize Donor Sabbath to raise awareness in faith communities because people often believe that their religion does not support organ donation,” White explained. “We want to dispel this myth since most religions honor and respect this act of generosity. Each year, 300 people die in Illinois because of a shortage of organs. We want to make sure organs are available and that means raising awareness about the importance of registering to become a donor.”

During the weekend of Nov. 15-17, faith leaders and congregations participate in services and events to increase awareness of this vital program. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, the majority of major religions support organ and tissue donation including Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam and Judaism.

Kelly Roberts and Pastor David Potete of Northwest Community Church in Chicago were featured in the PSA that was unveiled at the event. Pastor Potete donated a kidney to Roberts. In the PSA, he says, “One of the core values of our church is serving others. I can't tell you how good it felt to help a friend.”

“His selfless act was a real life miracle to me and I am so thankful for a second chance at life,” Roberts said.

The PSA was distributed to approximately 100 radio stations statewide to further heighten awareness to the program. It is also featured on the state's organ/tissue donor website at <https://www.lifegoeson.com/media/commercials.html>.

Currently, more than 114,000 people are waiting for organs nationally. In Illinois, despite a registry of more than 6.8 million, approximately 4,700 people are on the waiting list.

Other faith leaders and partners participating in National Donor Sabbath include Tracy Alston, First Ladies Initiative; Rev. Anthony McPherson, Mid-America Transplant Service; Eversight; the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois and Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network.

For more information on organ/tissue donation or to register to become a donor, visit www.LifeGoesOn.com, call the Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program at 1-800-210-2106 or visit a Driver Services facility.