

Alaska State Legislature

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Representative Lesil McGuire

Chair, Judiciary Committee

HB 337

"An Act relating to anatomical donor registries, to an anatomical gift awareness fund, to an anatomical gift awareness program, and to motor vehicle licenses and registrations."

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Currently there are over 90,000 men, women and children waiting for organ transplants nationwide, of which 85 are Alaskans. In addition, many more of your fellow Alaskans are currently waiting for tissue (bone, tendon, skin, heart valve, cornea) donations. While 66 people receive organ transplants in the U.S. every day, another 17 people on the waiting list will die because not enough organs are available.

Alaskans have always been known for their generosity and caring for their neighbors and the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act continues this long tradition. This legislation creates a donor registry program in which a donor's License/ID information can be transferred to Life Alaska Donor Services, the state's organ & tissue donor program. Should the donor not want to have their information transferred to the donation program, the donor can choose not to participate. Also the donor can opt out of the program at any time and their information will be removed from the registry.

Currently, the licensee's donor status is only located as a printed statement on the physical ID and not within the DMV database. This lack of a registry creates a problem for donation in a timely fashion. The DMV currently keeps no records of the Licensee's status; therefore the donation program may not realize the donor's wishes or may realize the donor's wishes too late for the donation to be medically acceptable.

With this legislation, the donor's status and other information will be available to Life Alaska Donor Services so that the donor's gift may be realized with or without the donor having their License/State ID card at the time of death. This will also allow Life Alaska to quickly ascertain the donor status of the Licensee and match the donor's gift with a suitable recipient.

In addition to the creation of the registry, HB 337 will create a monetary donation program in which a motor vehicle applicant may donate \$1 or more to the Organ & Tissue Donation Awareness Fund. The purpose of the fund is to promote organ & tissue donation and to administer the Organ & Tissue Donation Awareness Fund. Although the donation is voluntary the Department of Motor Vehicles will make information on the importance of organ donation available to all applicants.

Similar bills have already been passed in Washington and Montana in 2003 with great success. Please support this bill, so that Life Alaska Donor Services will have quick and efficient access to information that will ultimately save the life of you or a loved one.