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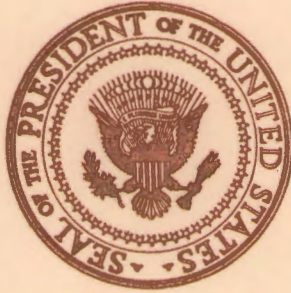
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National Organ Donation Awareness Week, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

One of the most meaningful gifts that one human being can bestow upon another is the precious gift of life. It can be given simply by making arrangements to donate our organs or those of our loved ones after death. Donation of our corneas would give others the gift of sight; donation of our kidneys, hearts, lungs, livers, and pancreata could save the lives of many people who might otherwise die.

On several occasions during the last year, I have asked the American people to be aware of the opportunities to donate their organs, and I have made special pleas for small children in need of liver transplants. The response proved to be overwhelming. Tragically, however, many desperately ill persons, including small children, have died while awaiting a suitable organ.

Ironically, recent surveys indicate that about 93 percent of all Americans have heard about organ transplants, but the need for organs far surpasses the number donated each year. Our organ procurement system is being managed effectively by the private sector but can be improved to meet a larger portion of the need. For these reasons, I supported the establishment of the American Council on Transplantation. The primary goal of this national umbrella organization is to increase the availability of organs for transplantation.

It is appropriate that we as a Nation encourage organ donation and increase public awareness of the need for such donations. By filling out a uniform donor card and carrying it, and by making our wishes of donation known to our families, we may give the gift of life to people who so desperately need solid organs for transplantation, an exceedingly scarce resource.

Americans are a caring and giving people. I have heard from many Americans who have lost their loved ones in tragic accidents, but who have found solace in knowing that through their loss other lives were saved.

The Congress, by House Joint Resolution 229, has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the week beginning April 22, 1984, as "National Organ Donation Awareness Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week of April 22 through April 28, 1984, as National Organ Donation Awareness Week. I urge all citizens, health care professionals, educators, the media, and the public and private organizations concerned with organ donation and transplantation to join me in supporting this humanitarian action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan