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Last Updated: 05/2023



National Organ Donation Awareness Week, 1985

A Proclamation

By the President of the United States of America

The most precious gift that one human being can bestow upon another is the 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 recent occasions, I have asked the American people to be aware of the opportunities to donate their organs, and I have made special pleas for young children in need of liver transplants. The response proved to be overwhelming. Tragically, however, many desperately ill persons, including young children, have died while awaiting a suitable organ.

The need for organs far surpasses the number donated each year. To increase the availability of organs for transplantation, I signed the National Organ Transplant Act on October 19, 1984. This law created an Office of Organ Transplantation in the Public Health Service and authorized a Task Force on Organ Transplantation.

It is appropriate that we as a Nation encourage organ donation and increase public awareness of the need for such donations. We also should recognize the many contributions of private organizations, including the American Council on Transplantation, to this effort. 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 organs for transplantation.

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 Senate Joint Resolution 35, has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the week beginning April 21 through April 27, 1985, as "National Organ Donation Awareness Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate April 21 through April 27, 1985, as National Organ Donation Awareness Week. I urge all health care professionals, educators, the media, public and private organizations concerned with organ donation and transplantation, and all Americans to join me in supporting this humanitarian action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

Ronald Reagan