



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0790-2015, **Version:** *

Res. No. 790

Resolution calling on the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to amend its Model Plan for Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies to allow guest speakers to make remarks on the importance of becoming an organ donor.

By Council Member Constantinides

Whereas, According to Donate Life America, New York State has the third highest need for organ donors in the United States; and

Whereas, There are over 10,000 individuals in New York who need life-saving organ transplants; and

Whereas, In 2013, almost 600 individuals in New York died due to a shortage of donors; and

Whereas, Despite the great need for organ transplants in New York, the state has the second lowest percentage of registered donors in the country; and

Whereas, New York State is unique in that it allows individuals to sign up to be organ donors when registering to vote; and

Whereas, Naturalization ceremonies present an opportunity for new citizens to both register to vote and become organ donors simultaneously; and

Whereas, New York City can specifically benefit from this opportunity, as approximately 30,000 individuals were naturalized in this City between 2009-2013, according to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau; and

Whereas, In certain counties in New York, including Rockland, Orange, Dutchess and Putnam, guest

speakers at naturalization ceremonies are allowed to make remarks on the importance of becoming an organ donor; and

Whereas, Anecdotal evidence gathered by donor network LiveOnNY suggests that approximately 45% of naturalization ceremony participants who receive organ donation information enroll to be donors, compared to 11% of individuals who enroll at Department of Motor Vehicles offices; and

Whereas, While the naturalization ceremonies of these counties are overseen either by District Attorneys or County Clerks, naturalization ceremonies in New York City are overseen by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); and

Whereas, USCIS has established in its Model Plan for Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies the topics that may be discussed by guest speakers at naturalization ceremonies, such as the importance and responsibilities of United States citizenship and the privilege of voting; and

Whereas, If USCIS expanded the policy in its Model Plan for Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies to allow guest speakers to make remarks on organ donation, the number of individuals in New York City registering to be donors could greatly increase, given the large number of individuals naturalized in this City annually; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to amend its Model Plan for Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies to allow guest speakers to make remarks on the importance of becoming an organ donor.

LS #4922
MA
5/18/15