



STEVE WIECKERT

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

CHAIRMAN
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ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Friday, January 30, 2004
EMBARGO UNTIL 11:00 AM

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Wieckert's \$10,000 Organ Donation Bill Signed Into Law **Similar Legislation Pending in New York, Indiana**

AB 477, authored by State Representative Steve Wieckert (R-Appleton) was signed into law today at a ceremony at St. Luke's Medical Center in Milwaukee. "I am simply elated that Governor Doyle signed this first-of-its-kind legislation into law. Organ donors are truly heroes. The act of donating is benevolent enough. Donors should not be expected to pay out-of-pocket expenses to be able to donate," said Representative Wieckert. "This legislation starts to remove the disincentives for organ donation."

AB 477 has already received extensive state and national media coverage, including coverage in the Post Crescent, New York Times, Paul Harvey news and commentary, Chicago Sun Times, USA Today, Washington Post, Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, Capital Times, Wisconsin State Journal, Wisconsin Public Television's "Here and Now," KDK Radio, WGN's "To Your Health" with Lyle Dean, and other significant media sources. "It is my hope that this legislation will act as a shot-heard-around-the-nation, with other states enacting similar legislation. This will help to dramatically increase the number of available organs and begin to save the lives of the 5,000 people who would otherwise pass away each year waiting for an organ transplant," Representative Wieckert said. There are currently 83,399 people on the national waiting list for an organ transplant.

The Wisconsin Medical Society, and world-renowned transplant surgeon, Hans Sollinger, were early supporters of this legislation, which helped make its advancement possible. Awareness of this important topic is also enhanced by the active support of Tina Sauerhammer – the current Miss Wisconsin, and actor Larry Hagman of "Dallas."

Organs available for transplant are received more from living donors than from people who have passed away. This recent national trend is expected to continue, making this legislation that much more important.

IDEALS, PRINCIPLES, PATRIOTISM

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COMMITTEES: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT • GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS • HEALTH • HOUSING • INSURANCE



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AB 477 is the first-of-its kind in the nation, which offers a \$10,000 tax deduction for travel, housing and lost wages of the donor, and is already being considered model legislation for other states. Indiana and New York are also considering legislation based on AB 477.

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