



CT Coalition for Organ & Tissue Donation  
d b a **Donate Life Connecticut**

P.O. Box 4000 • Woodbridge, CT 06525 • Phone: (203) 387-1549 • [www.ctorganandtissuedonation.org](http://www.ctorganandtissuedonation.org)

Senator Gayle S. Slossberg and Representative James Field Spallone  
Government Administrations and Elections Committee Co-Chairs  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2200  
Hartford, CT 06106

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
The Connecticut Coalition for Organ and Tissue Donation, dba,  
DONATE LIFE CONNECTICUT (DLC)  
Presented to  
THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIONS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
on the  
AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

March 16, 2009

Thank you Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone and the members of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee for allowing Donate Life Connecticut (DLC) to submit this written testimony for the record. DLC is an all volunteer, non profit organization that is dedicated to public education and public awareness for all Connecticut residents concerning the life saving benefits of organ, eye and tissue donation. Our statewide collaborative includes healthcare organizations and passionate individuals that recently began an initiative to decrease racial disparities pertaining to donation through grants funded by the Aetna Foundation and the New Alliance Foundation.

In an effort to improve donor registration in the African American community, DLC first reached out to the Connecticut African American Affairs Commission (AAAC). In less than a year, the AAAC has forged the way for DLC to connect with the African American community in Connecticut through various outlets. DLC has been profiled on the AAAC's thirty minute television program airing statewide on public access channels addressing African American concerns. This opportunity allowed nearly 70,000 Connecticut homes to hear personal transplantation stories of fellow African Americans. Complimenting this media event, the AAAC included DLC's mission, a donor story and a recipient story on the home page of their website! The AAAC online event calendar also includes upcoming events held by DLC. The type of exposure we receive on the AAAC website and calendar offers public awareness tools for our mission that we could receive no where else.

In addition to the public outreach offered by the AAAC, the commission has connected DLC with over 150 Hartford-based African American churches. Through this contact, DLC was able to mail each pastor a kit to help incorporate the donation message into sermons and discussions in houses of worship. The AAAC has coordinated an opportunity for DLC to address the Hartford Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA), further encouraging them to discuss donation with their congregations. Most recently, Donate Life Connecticut was invited by the AAAC to provide donation information and donor registration capability during the Black History Month events at the Capitol in February. A future collaboration in late spring/early summer is being planned to hold a Community Donation Awareness Luncheon in the Hartford area, with the capacity to educate hundreds of Hartford citizens about organ and tissue donation.

The AAAC has provided an invaluable service to our organization's newly funded program to decrease racial disparities. Without the contacts and endorsements of the AAAC, this project would have been difficult, if not impossible to be successful. The resources and community bridges that the AAAC provides to the African American community are necessary tools for health care organizations to utilize to reach target audiences. DLC seeks to provide the tools for all Connecticut residents to make an educated decision to save another person's life, like the nearly 1000 Connecticut residents waiting for a life-saving transplant. DLC plans to continue this new program for years into the future, ultimately decreasing racial donation disparities in Connecticut. The success of this initiative is dependent on the functioning of the African American Affairs Commission.

Donate Life Connecticut thanks you for the opportunity to testify to the importance of our forged partnership to save lives in the African American community.

-Submitted by Kari Mull, Program Coordinator, Donate Life Connecticut