



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

### ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- **April 15, 2002**
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### **Secretary of State Jesse White Announces Organ Donor Campaign** *Olympian and Organ Recipient Chris Klug Joins White and Connie Payton To Promote The Organ Donor Program*

**CHICAGO** — With the help of Olympic bronze medalist Chris Klug and Connie Payton, Secretary of State Jesse White today launched Illinois' annual organ donor campaign.

White unveiled a new commercial featuring U2's "Beautiful Day," which tells the story of Chris Klug, the only organ recipient ever to compete in the Olympics. Klug won the bronze medal in snowboarding's parallel giant slalom in the Salt Lake City Olympics in February. Klug, who suffered from the same disease as Chicago Bear Walter Payton, received a liver transplant in July of 2000.

"Chris' story is inspirational because it shows that organ donors can make dreams come true, even Olympic dreams," said White. "That's why it is so important for people to sign the back of their driver's licenses and tell their families."

Secretary White's program led the National Council on Organ Donation to coordinate the filming of Klug for nationwide use. Illinois has the largest organ donor registry in the country with over five million registered.

Also at the announcement, Secretary White presented Connie Payton, wife of Walter Payton, with a national Telly award. Connie Payton appeared in the 2000 organ donation commercial that told Walter's story and led to a surge in enrollment in the Illinois Organ Donor Registry. The Telly, which was awarded to the commercial for excellence as a public service announcement, showcases outstanding non-network commercials.

Klug and Walter Payton were diagnosed with Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC), a rare, degenerative bile duct condition. (See [www.chrisklug.com](http://www.chrisklug.com) for details)

"Walter Payton was always a big hero of mine long before I knew we shared the same liver condition PCS," Klug said. "I sent him a letter and said, hey, I have PSC too and we're going to beat this together. Unfortunately that wasn't the case for Walter."

Although Illinois has the largest donor registry nationwide, there are still more than 5,000 people in Illinois waiting for a transplant and 400 people in the state died last year while waiting.

"That's why it is so important to continue to educate the public on this lifesaving issue," White said. "I encourage families to take time out this month to discuss organ donation."

Anyone can sign up for the organ donor registry, to do so:

- 1) Sign the organ/tissue donor portion on the back of your Illinois driver's license or ID card directly on the plastic with a ballpoint pen. Two people, preferably family members, should witness it.
- 2) Join the Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. When you visit a Driver Services facility, you will be asked if you want to sign the back of your driver's license and join the Registry. You also can join the Registry by filling out an organ donor card and mailing it to this office, by calling 1-800-210-2106 or by visiting my Web site at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com).
- 3) Tell your family. Hospitals will not remove any organs or tissue without permission from the donor's family.

In addition to the commercials, other initiatives for the month include a celebrity basketball game at the Windy City Fieldhouse on April 24th from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Donations will benefit the Illinois "Spare Parts" team that will participate in the U.S. Transplant Games.

White will also participate in the 12th Annual Organ Tissue Support Dedication to Honor All Organ and Tissue Donors. Transplant recipients, living donors, and donor families will plant a tree commemorating those donors and recipients at the Naper Settlement in Naperville on April 28 at 1:30 p.m.

White will be visiting various hospitals in the Chicago area commending them on their participation and work in the area

of organ donation.

White will attend events planned in communities throughout Illinois to highlight National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, April 21-28.

Also participating at the new conference were representatives of the Regional Organ Bank of Illinois, Illinois Eye Bank, American Liver Foundation, and the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois.