

This column was inspired by "How to Fix the Organ Donation Crisis," a Viewpoint commentary published by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy in March 2003.

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Pay for organ donations? Maybe, as DeVos says, it's the way to go

I may be changing my mind concerning the donation of human organs.

Before I speak, I feel compelled to confess that when discussing the subject with someone recently, I discovered that my driver's license did not carry the information needed to assure that my organs were "good to go" if I were brain dead and they were needed by someone. When my new license arrived in the mail recently I had failed to complete the form on the back due to my ever-deteriorating brain cells. My organs are now back on line to be used if and when most of my brain cells are giving up the ghost.

I have been pretty much against any form of payment for organs because I felt that there was no system that would protect the donor from those who would prey on a poor, weak or sick person for his or her organs. I have decided that there is no perfect system for anything and the fact of the matter is, a lot of selfish people are carrying perfectly good organs to their graves — organs that could mean additional life to a person. Perhaps if some of these people knew that they would leave behind some financial benefits to their family if they donated their organs, then just perhaps they might sign up for the program.

To be sure I wish such a step was not necessary. I wish people would give up on the idea that they will need their organs in the next life. My friends, those organs will return to dust sooner or later so they won't be useful to you anyway. You might as well give your organs away, just as your family is going to give away your old shoes and overcoats after you're gone.

But I know that some of you folks are always prone to ask "What's in it for me?" There will probably never be anything in it for you because you will be dying when everything goes down, but under a plan being championed by Richard DeVos, there may be something in it for your relatives who, if you keep your trap shut, will not even know about the windfall until you are doing the death rattle thing.

It seems to me, after discussion with people in the know, that something like what DeVos is proposing might be worth a try. It seems a trial run of his system is



JOHN DOUGLAS

little enough that one can do to save a life. If we find that the system is fraught with abuse then we can shut down the program and try something else.

If you want to find out more about what DeVos is proposing, you can go to www.mackinac.org/5040 to discover the basics. Read it over and see what you think. If you don't like the idea, then show DeVos your displeasure by immediately signing up to donate your organs for free. That will show him where you stand.

Just think of how you will be received in heaven when it is discovered that your very last act on Earth was to help a needy person. If you were on your way to hell, something like donating an organ might just work in your favor should there be an appeal in your eternal sentencing.

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John Douglas can be reached by writing to him at *The Press* at 155 Michigan St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, or by e-mail at jdouglas@grpress.com.