

## POLITICS AS USUAL:

**By Alison Collins-Mrakas**

Today I became an organ donor.

It took exactly 2 minutes.

Just 2 minutes of my time to potentially save someone else's life.

I think that's worth it, don't you?

To be honest, I thought I was an organ donor already as I had a vague memory of signing something a few years ago. However, apparently that was not the case. I learned that today when I went to renew my health card and there was no notation on the card. So, I rectified that situation immediately.

As a cancer survivor, I had always assumed that given the treatments I received, I would not be able to donate any organs. Again, that is not true for many survivors, and certainly not true in my case. The type of cancer I had (thyroid) and the treatment I received has no effect on my ability to be a donor.

So, I signed the form to make sure that I can rest assured that regardless of anything else I do with my life, I can go to the next realm, whatever that may be, knowing that I did one thing that may have a good impact for someone else.

This is not to sit in judgment of those who do not wish to donate their organs. Everyone has their own reasons to donate or to not donate. Donating an organ is an incredibly personal decision. I do not think it is for any of us to judge one way or the other. There is no right or wrong decision.

That being said, there is some erroneous information out there as it speaks to the donation process that affects donation rates that I do think should be addressed. There have been reports or studies ? in media, in journals, or what have you, that seem to suggest that for some folks at least, the reason they don't donate is that they are afraid that they will be taken off life support or taken before their time, so to speak, in order that their organs may be harvested.

In other words, people are afraid that if they sign the form, then somehow they are at risk of having their organs taken before they are actually dead.

Let me allay that fear for you: that is simply not true. I don't know how these urban legends get started, but they are truly pernicious. No one is taking any part of you for the purposes of donation without proceeding through a number of strict procedures ? most obvious of which is ensuring that you are, in fact, deceased.

Neither will your death be hastened so that someone may have one or more of your organs. Again, this is simply not true.

Organ donation saves lives.

According to Organ Donation Canada, ?One donor can save the lives of up to 10 people and significantly improve the lives of many more.? By signing that little card, you have done your part to help others in need.

For me, it was an important decision to make. I hope someday, when I end my days on this earth, that I am able to give someone else the opportunity to live many more days.