

# Death Row Inmates Should Be Permitted to Donate Organs

Janelle Spira

## POLICY PROPOSAL

**ABSTRACT:** Death row inmates should be permitted to donate their organs because it would save the lives of recipients, provide moral contrition for prisoners, and produce an overwhelming benefit that would outweigh the cost of coercion. Allowing death row inmates to donate their organs would help alleviate the dire need for more organ transplants. There are over 123,000 people on the organ transplant list and allowing death row inmates to donate would save the lives of people who are in desperate need of organ transplants. In addition, allowing inmates to donate organs would benefit the prisoners by allowing them to do one final act of good and experience moral atonement before they die.

An element of coercion does exist in the organ transplant process because prisons are an innately coercive environment; however, safeguards such as education to ensure informed consent would be implemented to combat coerciveness. By restricting organ donation to death row inmates only, the coercive elements of living prisoner donation are avoided. Unlike general population prisoners who might hope to receive something in return for their organs, death row inmates have nothing to gain from donating their organs except moral contrition.

Allowing death row inmates the option to donate their organs is the right thing to do. The benefits of providing life-saving organs to recipients in dire need and of providing moral atonement to prisoners outweigh the costs of coercion. No legislation exists that explicitly forbids death row inmates from donating organs; therefore, they should have the option to voluntarily consent to organ donation.

**ACADEMIC YEAR:** 2018

**SCHOOL:** Nursing & Health Sciences

**MAJOR:** Human Science

