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# MPP honours Cousens through bill

BY MICHAEL POWER  
Staff Writer

A question you may be answering when you get a driver's licence or health card is if you want to donate your organs after death.

Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees introduced a private member's bill at Queen's Park Wednesday that would require those 16 years of age or older to answer "yes", "no" or "undecided" to whether they wish to donate their organs.

"I believe it strikes a balance between respect for people's personal choice, but it will also raise awareness and allow people to focus on the issue and give it serious thought," Mr. Klees said.

Currently, if people don't fill out a donor card, their organs can't be donated unless family gives consent.

Some people have travelled to the United States for transplants, while others, who have remained on organ donor waiting lists in Ontario, haven't been so

lucky, he said.

"People have died on these waiting lists and are dying every day," said Mr. Klees.

About half of all Canadians who need organ transplants live in Ontario.

A competing bill, introduced Thursday at Queen's Park by New Democrat MP Peter Kormos, would see a dead person's organs harvested unless the deceased has indicated otherwise.

The practice, known as presumed consent, is law in about 20 European countries.

And while he respects Mr. Kormos for bringing the bill forward, Canada isn't ready for the notion, Mr. Klees said.

"I think that presumed consent is going too far," he said. "I don't think it respects the personal choice of individuals and I don't think it would be accepted by Canadians."

Mr. Klees said he tabled the bill in honour of Markham Mayor Don Cousens, a recipient of a kidney.

Mr. Cousens, 66, had a kidney transplant three years ago after experiencing organ failure.

A friend donated the kidney. "Mr. Klees and I discussed it and I'm really touched by it, I'm really honoured," Mr. Cousens said. "It (the bill) is a step in the right direction. Whether it's the final step I don't know but I'm really honoured."

Mr. Cousens' condition, known as polycystic kidney disease, is hereditary and causes fluid-filled cysts to form in the kidneys.

Since the transplant, Mr. Cousens has faced complications because of the disease. He declined to talk in detail about his health, but said he may need another kidney at some point.

"Let's just say that I could be a prospect for a transplant," he said.

He agreed with Mr. Klees that Canadians would embrace more readily a choice on organ donation, which at least lets people mull over the issue.

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## 'Emotion overwhelming' for recipient

From page 1.

itary disease that earlier had taken the life of her father and similarly affected her brother.

For almost two years, Mrs. Seeley travelled to York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill, where three times a

week she was hooked up to a dialysis machine.

"The word soon spread," she said. "A replacement kidney was required."

But from whom? Just any kidney wouldn't do.

Rev. Karl Burden, minister at Central United, provided Mrs. Seeley and her

husband, Dennis, the assurance they needed.

"Not in your time but in God's time," he told them.

She described as "incredible" those who came forward wanting to be tested.

"By choice, they were willing to go through surgery," she said, "willing to give of themselves so I might live a normal life."

### ON COMMITTEES TOGETHER

One was Ardith Knechtel, a friend of the Seeleys who had served with them on some of the same church committees, including Christian education as well as superintendent of the Sunday school.

"We're all members of God's family," Ms Knechtel said. "I was pleased when I passed the tests. I knew it was the right thing for me."

The feeling was mutual. "It felt good," said Mrs. Seeley. "It seemed right that she should be the one. The emotion was overwhelming."

When the matches proved compatible and St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto gave the OK, they both breathed collective sighs of relief.

"It was almost too good to be true," said Mrs. Seeley. "For me, it was truly a miracle."

Both women are grateful to the congregation of Central United Church for their support — support that included a service of healing and an evening prayer vigil.

"The feelings were overwhelming," said Mrs. Seeley. "For us it was both a faith journey and a medical journey."

"It's one way of sharing with another," said Ms Knechtel.

### FAITH IN GOD

She said her faith in God reassured her that she was doing the right thing. She also praised the support of her husband and children as well as staff of Markham Stouffville Hospital for allowing her the necessary time off.

"After 10 weeks, I was back playing tennis. I knew then things had returned to normal," she said with a smile.

As a sign of their gratitude the Seeleys hosted Ms Knechtel and her husband on a one-week holiday in Florida.

Both women agree the need for kidney transplant donors is tremendous.

"We want to get the message out," said Mrs. Seeley. "Please sign your organ donor card and let your family know."

"There's a lack of awareness," agrees Ms Knechtel. "It's a way of sharing one's gift with another."

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### Public Notice Licensing By-Law Amendment

The Town of Markham is conducting a public meeting pursuant to the requirements of subsection 150(4) of the *Ontario Municipal Act*, on:

**Tuesday, February 21, 2006 at 6 p.m.**  
Council Chamber, Markham Civic Centre  
101 Town Centre Blvd.

The public is invited to make representations regarding proposed amendments to the licensing by-law listed below and to the License Fee By-law and the Adult Entertainment By-law published in an earlier notice. The specific amendments will be considered by Council at a later date.

Title/By-law #	Purpose	Affected Changes
Taxi By-law 2002-308	Consumer Protection Public Safety Administration	Increase in Tariff Fares, consistent with rates in Toronto and Vaughan.

For additional information, contact Darlene Barker, Provincial Offenses Supervisor at 905-477-7000 ext. 2128 or [dbarker@markham.ca](mailto:dbarker@markham.ca)

A copy of the above by-law is available from the Town of Markham Clerk's Department or online at [www.markham.ca](http://www.markham.ca)

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