



The Sale of Human Organs for Transplants

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A majority of Americans oppose legalizing the sale of human organs for transplant purposes, and nearly half of U.S. residents consider such sales to be wrong, according to an [Exclusive Point Taken-Marist Poll](#), commissioned by WGBH Boston for its new late-night, multi-platform PBS debate series *Point Taken*. While a plurality of Americans think legalization of this process would help regulate the sale of human organs, notable concern about a black market exists.

The national survey was conducted by The Marist Poll in advance of this week's *Point Taken* episode, airing Tuesday, June 28th at 11pmET (check local listings) and streaming on pbs.org/pointtaken. The series is hosted by Carlos Watson, Emmy Award winning journalist and OZY Media co-founder and CEO.

55% of Americans do not think the sale of human organs for transplant purposes should be legal. 33% support such action. Women, 62%, are more likely than men, 48%, to oppose legalizing the sale of human organs for transplants. Millennials, 42%, are more likely than older Americans to *favor* the legalization of these transactions. Members of Gen X, 24%, are the least likely to support legalization.

In assessing the moral dimension of this debate, 49% of U.S. residents believe it is wrong for someone to sell their organs, such as a kidney, to a transplant patient who can afford to pay the price. Again, gender and generational differences are present. Women, 58%, are more likely than men, 40%, to consider it wrong to sell human organs to transplant patients. Generationally, Millennials, 52%, are more likely than other generations to think receiving money for one's organs is acceptable.

What effect would legalizing the sale of human organs have? A plurality of Americans, 47%, including 30% who are against permitting these transactions, assert that legalizing the sale of human organs would provide regulations and minimize the risks. But, more than four in ten Americans, 41%, say it would lead to a black market and endanger lives. Men, 53%, are more inclined than women, 41%, to perceive the positive benefit of legalizing the sale of human organs.

"Tonight on *Point Taken*, we debate the legal and moral implications of the sale of human organs," says Denise Dilanni, series creator and Senior Executive-In-Charge, "as well as questions of how we decide who gets access to life saving organs."

When only one organ is available and several patients need that organ for survival, 56% of Americans say the best way to decide who should be the beneficiary is to give it to the patient who has been waiting the longest. 51% of men, compared with 62% of

*All references to the survey must be sourced as "Exclusive *Point Taken*-Marist Poll"



women, say those highest on the waiting list should receive the available organ. Of all the generations, Gen X, 69%, is the most likely to support this method of selection.

A majority of Americans, 56%, report the *worst* way to decide to whom the organ should go is to assign it through auction and provide it to the person who can pay the most for it. Those who earn \$50,000 or more annually, 64%, are more likely than those who make less, 50%, to have this view. Members of the Silent-Greatest generation, 38%, are the least likely to consider bidding to be the *worst* method and are more than twice as likely as any other generation to say using the waiting list is the *worst* way to select a transplant recipient.

On the personal level, most Americans, 81%, report they would not be likely to sell one of their kidneys. Residents who make less than \$50,000 a year, 24%, are twice as likely as those who earn more, 12%, to say they would sell a kidney. Millennials, 27%, are more likely than older generations to say the same.

A majority of Americans, 55%, say they would not allow their heirs to sell their organs after death although members of the Silent-Greatest generation divide, 47% to 47%.

This survey of 516 adults was conducted May 24th and May 25th, 2016 by The Marist Poll sponsored and funded in partnership with WGBH's Point Taken. Adults 18 years of age and older residing in the contiguous United States were contacted on landline or mobile numbers and interviewed in English by telephone using live interviewers. Results are statistically significant within ± 4.3 percentage points. The error margin was not adjusted for sample weights and increases for cross-tabulations.

For more on *Point Taken*:

pbs.org/pointtaken

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For more on The Marist Poll:

Maristpoll.marist.edu

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About The Marist Poll

Founded in 1978, The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.

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About WGBH Boston

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