*The passages below relate to the question: Should organ donation be automatic, based on a system of presumed consent? As you read, decide whether each comment could be used as part of a case for or against automatic organ donation in these circumstances.*

**Comment I**

It’s fine if people want to sign up to donate their organs after death. But organ donation must rely upon the explicit consent of the donor. If the law is changed so you can take my organs without my permission, that’s not ‘donation’—it’s theft.

**Comment II**

The current system requires organ donors to ‘opt in’ while they are able to consent—or their families to do so after their death—or their organs cannot be donated. As a result, thousands of people die each year waiting for an organ transplant. Moving to a system of presumed consent would allow doctors to provide much-needed organs to significantly more of these patients, saving countless lives.

**Comment III**

Like many religions, my faith teaches that it violates the body to remove organs while the donor is still alive. In most cases, organ removal must be done while the heart is beating. But if the heart is beating when the organs are cut out, the doctor is murdering the patient. It is wrong to require a procedure that conflicts with our fundamental religious beliefs.

**Comment IV**

Australia should change to a system of organ donation by presumed consent. Countries such as Spain and Austria have had some of the highest rates of organ donation since adopting presumed consent. It follows that presumed consent will lead to an increase in organ donation in Australia.

**Comment V**

The main reason we don’t have enough organs donated in the present ‘opt-in’ system is that it puts pressure on doctors and nurses to ask someone at the end of life—or families of such a patient—to agree to donate their organs. This is a sensitive time, and our doctors and nurses are already overworked. We can best address this problem by increasing training for doctors and nurses, so they are better prepared to deal with end-of-life issues.

**Comment VI**

The current system of organ donation in Australia works well. People who want to donate their organs sign up to do so, when they are in good health and capable of consent. This ensures that everyone involved in the donation process is a willing participant and that the organs go to the person who needs them the most.

**Comment VII**

We like to think of organ donation as ‘the gift of life’, but this idea misrepresents the underlying dynamic, and it’s ultimately responsible for the appalling low rates of voluntary donation. The right to life is fundamental, and it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that everyone contributes to preserving the lives of others. This isn’t about a ‘gift’ we could choose to withhold; it’s a mutual obligation to contribute to life-saving measures, regardless of our personal views or preferences.

**Comment VIII**

All the focus on recruiting more voluntary organ donors with expensive state and national advertising campaigns is misguided. We will increase the rate of organ donation not by obtaining consent from more potential donors in advance, but instead by identifying more potential donors before brain death occurs. This approach would allow the medical staff to secure consent to donate their organs from their families, so the hospital team can harvest the organs soon after brain death.

**Comment IX**

It is grossly unfair to put pressure on relatives of someone who has suffered a terrible illness or catastrophic injury to decide whether to donate their organs. A system of presumed consent removes these pressures, allowing the medical staff to focus on providing life-saving care to patients in greatest need of organs while leaving the relatives of the deceased patient to mourn their loss in peace.