

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 5926

Doreen Busca – March 17, 2008

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My name is Doreen Busca and I am writing in support of Bill 5926 and in support of allowing parents of stillborn children the option of receiving a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth. My daughter Delaney Caitlin Busca was born still on March 13, 2007. My family's story is just one of the estimated 25,000 to 39,000 stillbirths in the U.S. each year. That is approximately 83 per day or 4 per hour. After hearing our story, it is my hope that you will understand why this bill is needed in the State of Connecticut.

On July 14, 2006, my husband Sean and I were thrilled to find out that I was pregnant. After enduring five long years of various fertility treatments, we received the joyous news that our baby's due date was March 21, 2007. We believed that the roller coaster of emotional highs and lows that we endured during our quest to have a baby had finally come to an end.

As the months passed, we enjoyed every moment of my pregnancy. All of my prenatal tests and appointments went smoothly. Because we required the assistance of fertility treatments to conceive our baby, I had to go through extra testing to monitor the baby's development. Even all of those extra tests came back with normal and positive results. The doctors all reassured me that we had a very healthy baby that was developing normally. We watched our baby grow through regular ultrasounds and always heard a strong heartbeat when we went to the doctor's office. Sean and I marveled at how strong and active the baby was and we loved feeling the baby kick. Just two weeks before my due date, we decided to decorate the baby's nursery. We were in the "home stretch" and we were so excited. We couldn't wait to meet our baby!!

On Sunday, March 11, I began worrying about the fact that I really hadn't felt the baby move. Everyone told me that it was the end of my pregnancy and that the baby was getting bigger and that he or she didn't have very much room. I knew I had a doctor's appointment the next day and reassured myself that everything was fine. Then, in the middle of the night, on Sunday, March 11, I went into labor. I was so excited... to me going into labor meant that everything was okay and I had worried for nothing.

When I arrived at my doctor's office, the midwife examined me and she told me that I was just over a centimeter dilated. She said she also wanted to quickly check the baby's heartbeat. When she put the Doppler to my belly, she could not find the baby's heartbeat. Thinking that the baby was turned around somehow, she said she would do an ultrasound to double check. I was becoming nervous but wouldn't allow myself to believe that there was anything wrong. We went into another room and she performed an ultrasound. When Sean and I looked at the screen, we knew instantly that things were not right. We could not see the baby's heartbeat.

The midwife would not confirm anything on her own and told us that we needed to go to the hospital to meet with one of my doctors. When we arrived at the hospital, a doctor performed another ultrasound and our worst fears were realized. That moment that the doctor uttered the words "I'm sorry to tell you that your baby is gone" will live in my heart and mind forever. I remember screaming so loudly that it couldn't possibly be true. The next thing I heard was one of the nurses closing the door to my room so that the other women in labor wouldn't hear me screaming and crying.

I stayed at the hospital and had my labor induced. After 24 hours of labor, Delaney Caitlin Busca was born still at 1:55 am on Tuesday, March 13, 2007. She was 7 lbs .4 oz, 21 ½ inches long. Even though she was not breathing, Delaney was perfect in every way. My husband and I marveled at how much she looked like me. Immediately after delivery, the doctors were able to let us know that there was a knot in Delaney's umbilical cord. According to the doctors, a "true knot" is incredibly rare and something that cannot be detected in ultrasounds. As Delaney grew bigger, the knot grew tighter and tighter. Just days before her due date, the knot grew so tight that it cut off her oxygen supply.

In the hours and days that followed Delaney's birth, we had to make decisions that we never thought we would have to face. We were told that we would have to bury or cremate our full-term baby. We were also told that we would receive a death certificate but we would not receive a birth certificate. We buried our daughter on March 16, 2007 and held a service for Delaney with over 200 family members and friends. Just as we grieved for our daughter, our friends and relatives also grieved. Not only is Delaney a daughter, she is a granddaughter, niece, and cousin.

A stillbirth means an unintended, intrauterine fetal death occurring after a gestational age of not less than twenty completed weeks in which there is no attempt at respiration, no action of heart and no movement of voluntary muscle. To me, it only makes sense that Connecticut would want to record stillbirths as stillbirths. By officially recording stillbirths, we will be able to collect statistics that may help with research that could lead to the reduction or even prevention of these tragic deaths. It will also provide validation to the families of stillborn babies.

Please do not ignore my pain and the pain of these other families who have endured the devastation of stillbirth. Please allow us the option to receive a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth. Our children were born still but they were definitely still born. And, their births should be recorded in exactly that way.



Delaney Caitlin Busca  
Born Still on March 13, 2007

