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Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Committee, my name is Robert Backhaus, and I am here in support of Bill No. 5926, Certificates of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth. I am Natalie's father.

I want to thank everyone here today in attendance, for all their efforts and hard work they put forth daily in our system of government, so that individuals like myself are granted the time and opportunity to speak before you today.

I believe the act proposed concerning the issuance of a "certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth," is an act that is clear in nature and intention. It is simply to acknowledge a birth has occurred, albeit a non-live birth; thus the classification, "resulting in stillbirth". The point is, as in my daughter's case, a birth did occur; she was born. Maybe not born in the sense that some would normally like to think, or how current society or laws say we should think. Regardless of this thinking and any personal feelings on the matter, we cannot escape the fact that she was indeed born and a birth did actually occur.

Natalie, who was named after my paternal grandmother, after 32 weeks of Valerie's normal and healthy pregnancy, was born still at Milford Hospital, from a placental abruption caused from unknown reasons. Upon her death, she was issued a Certificate of Fetal Death as REQUIRED by the State of Connecticut. She then had a funeral service and was laid to rest in North Haven, again, as REQUIRED by the State of Connecticut. Yet, per the State of Connecticut, her birth is not acknowledged despite these required procedures.

This Act would be a step forward in making the current requirements and procedures regarding births, burials, and death certificates regarding stillborns, procedurally logical. This common sense Act would fill this current void in procedures, but will more importantly acknowledge the stillborns existence. Concurrently, it will give the mothers of these children a "real" tangible certificate with true meaning, not just a "commemorative" document that the Department of Public Health now issues upon request. When I think of commemorative, I think of coins and stamps, not of birth certificates. Adding the "tag" COMMEMORATIVE, I feel, demeans the birthing process in these instances. These are real women who had real births; let's give them real birth certificates. This Act will give recognition to all the lives that are born and lost, or lost and born as in our case, and maybe in some instances with your own constituents, families, and friends.

Again, this Act is only meant to acknowledge "a birth resulting in stillbirth". Let's follow the lead of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Jersey, as part of the 21 other states, which have already passed forms of this legislation, and other countries such as England and Australia where certificates for stillborns are required.

I thank you for your time and ask you to support this very meaningful Bill.