

TESTIMONY

Judiciary Committee

Monday, March 17, 2008

10:30 A.M. in Room 2c of the LOB

Proposed H.B. No. 5926

AN ACT CONCERNING FAMILIES WITH SERVICE NEEDS,
CERTIFICATES OF BIRTH RESULTING IN STILLBIRTH,
REENTRY AND DIVERSIONARY SERVICES FOR YOUTH,
AND DRUG COURTS FOR YOUTH

Good afternoon, Chaimen Lawlor and Senator McDonald. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to speak in regards to an issue that was brought to my attention this year. Earlier this year a woman from my area, Valerie Geremia, a constituent contacted me along with a group of strong advocates. She informed me that the state of Connecticut does not offer a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth. The issuance of a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth would allow for the families that have to endure the loss of a child a peace of mind. It would validate that they did give birth and endured the birthing process.

There are 25,000 to 40,000 stillbirths on average a year in our country. Unfortunately there is not a more accurate number, because of the current way that we record stillbirths in this country. Allowing for a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth will allow the medical community to have more exact numbers in relevance to stillbirths which will allow us to analyze the data better and will

allow for better research that could cut down on the number of stillbirths.

The bill in its current language has been crafted carefully as to not make it an abortion issue. That is why it has passed in 21 other states. It carefully defines a stillbirth as an unintended, intrauterine fetal death occurring after a gestational age of not less than 20 completed weeks in which there is no attempt at respiration, no action of heart and no movement of voluntary muscle. To try and interpret it as something else would be wrong. This is a bill about compassion and caring. It's about the unintended loss of children and the parents who must grieve their loss. I ask that the committee takes a closer look at this issue with not just an open mind, but an open heart.