



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 3, 2008

Meg Hooper/Director, Planning Branch/Vital Records 509-7128

House Bill 5703 - An Act Concerning the Issuance of a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth On Request of a Parent

The Department of Public Health opposes House Bill 5703.

This bill replaces the "Certificate of Stillbirth" that is issued by the Department of Public Health, with a new certificate named "Certificate of Birth Resulting in A Stillbirth." The bill makes a few changes in the way that the "Certificate of Birth Resulting in A Stillbirth" would be processed, compared with the existing procedures for the "Certificate of Stillbirth." The Department would like to bring the following matters to the attention of the committee:

- Section 1 of the bill defines "Certificate of birth resulting in a stillbirth" as a birth certificate issued to record the birth of a stillborn child. It is recommended that the word "birth" be removed from the definition, so that it is defined as "A certificate issued to record the birth of a stillborn child." This is necessary, because the term "birth certificate" as used throughout the general statutes, is actually an abbreviated term for "Certificate of Live Birth."
- Section 2 subsection (b) of the bill requires that the name of the fetus listed on the "Certificate of Birth Resulting in a Stillbirth" be the same name as that listed on the fetal death certificate. Our current procedure does not require that both names match. Since the "Certificate of Birth Resulting in A Stillbirth" will not be able to be used for proof of identity, we do not see a need for this restriction.
- Section 2 subsection (c) requires the Certificate of Birth Resulting in a Stillbirth to contain the state file number as listed on the fetal death certificate. We recommend that the state file number not be included on the document. The State File Number is not necessary since the document cannot be used for proof of identity or any other legal purpose, and requiring such number to appear on the document would create administrative problems.
- The bill proposes that the responsibility of issuing this certificate be shifted from the State Vital Records Office to the 169 local registrars. Presently, the State Vital Records Office is responsible for issuing the Certificate of Stillbirth, about 5 per year. We recommend that the State Vital Records Office retain the function of issuing the certificate so that there is one central registry for these certificate requests.

This same proposal has come up several times in the past few years. In response, we have spoken to vital records offices in other states who have the "Certificate of Birth Resulting in A Stillbirth." Aside from the larger political issues, these other states expressed concerns about the possibility of misuse of the document because it closely resembles a birth certificate. With key terms such as "Certificate of Birth," "Mother's/Father's Name" and a state file number, the document may be misconstrued as a birth certificate, particularly if used out of the country and read by someone not fluent in English.

Telephone Device for the Deaf: (860) 509-7191

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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