

# Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6507

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING MATERNAL CHOICE IN THE EVENT OF STILLBIRTH.

**Vote Date:** 3/15/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/2/2021

**File No.:** 210

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Committee on Children

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

To give mothers of a fetus that has died after 20 weeks or more the right to arrange for the burial or cremation.

The bill requires the hospital to give written notification of her right to make arrangements at the following times:

1. Upon admission, when practicable, if she is expected to deliver a stillborn fetus of
2. Within 24 hours after admission, if notifying her upon admission is not practicable or she is not expected to deliver a stillborn fetus when admitted.

The bill requires a mother who wishes to arrange burial or cremation of the fetus to

1. Make the election in writing.
2. Deliver it to the hospital within 72 hours after discharge.

The bill allows a mother who does not choose to arrange for burial or cremation to elect to be notified by the hospital of the manner of the final disposition of the stillborn fetus's remains.

The Department of Public Health is required to prescribe the forms to be used for the notices and elections.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None Submitted

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Katie Irwin** supports the bill. There should be a mandatory and universal amount of time to given to parents to make the decision about their child's remains. As a mother of a stillborn

daughter in July of 2015 this bill will give families time to make the right decisions for their angel babies. Upon the passing of our daughter we were visited by several doctors and nurses who spoke about a variety of postpartum options. These questions were asked of me as I labored over the death of my child. Between the pain of labor and the emotional pain of knowing our daughter had passed the hospital needed us to decide on what to do with our baby's remains. We made it clear that we wanted our daughter to be cremated. In July of 2016 we had a beautiful baby girl. In October of that year when I went to get our angel baby's the birth certificate, I noticed the box for "Burial" checked off and there was a cemetery listed. I called the cemetery and gave my last name and was given a grave marker site. When we went to the cemetery, we discovered our angel under number 487. We discovered about 900 markers in total. After speaking to the funeral home, we were able to move our daughter to her final resting place. We would also recommend a Social Worker be assigned to each grieving family within 24 hours from birth to discharge. The Social Worker shall have the proper training to answer questions and counsel families in grief and offer help in making the final decision.

**Grace Morningstar** testified in support of the bill. After giving birth to my child in a hospital in New Jersey who was only 16 weeks and did not survive I was able to spend time with my child and the nurse who came to take the baby was kind and gentle. I was able to have my child cremated and brought home immediately. Parents should never be separated from their children no matter the outcome of the birth. Outdated, inhumane hospital policies add to the trauma of the loss of a child.

**Connecticut Funeral Directors Association, Inc.** testified in support of the bill but with an amendment. The language in the bill excludes the paternal right and fetal death certificates require both the mother and the father. CFDA asks that this bill include "paternal choice" to also be able to arrange for burial or cremation of a fetus. In the case of a gestation of 20 weeks a fetal death certificate is not issued. Please incorporate our proposed language.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None Submitted

**Reported by: Pamela Bianca**

**Date: April 5th 2021**