

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Members of Committee for this opportunity to speak

(My name is Marcia McGinnis, and this is Erin Dickerson, a mother who lost her child to stillbirth.)

We want to thank Senator Weber, the co-sponsors of the No Heartbeat Act/Senate Bill 381, and Rep. Millar for their support.

The Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth, or CBRS, will make it possible for Georgian families to receive recognition of their stillborn children.

A Georgia family who experiences a stillbirth is offered only the fetal death certificate. These parents are asking for the **recognition of their baby's birth, apart from their death.**

Twenty-one states have ratified a CBRS law. Like these states, SB 381 permanently defines stillbirth. We used the **most commonly accepted medical definition of stillbirth.** The parents who lose a child after 20 weeks of gestation or whose baby weighs 350 grams would be given the *option* to receive a CBRS.

Because our son, Seth, died at two days of age, I have spent 24 years counseling parents whose babies have died. I helped establish, for grief resolution, the nationally recognized group SHARE Atlanta. I facilitate grief support groups, give inservices to professionals, and coordinate a grief network.

Today, I come to represent parents who have had their baby born into their waiting arms - **still.** These parents are faced with empty arms and few ways to bring closure to this tragic family experience. If they do not find resolution, their grief can last for years. The CBRS would be one important option for **healing.**

Every parent's worst nightmare is that their child will die before they do. Parents wait in great anticipation for the birth of their baby. Instead of celebrating with family and friends, they must plan a funeral and bury their child. As they **covered the cost to have their child, they must cover the costs involved in the saying good bye. A family's life is forever changed.**

To add to their grief, families can only receive a fetal death certificate. Few wish this validation of their grief. Like other families these parents seek a birth certificate. This one piece of paper would give closure and comfort to parents. The memorial CBRS is **validation** of this important family member.

Introduction of Erin:

Erin, a mother & a lawyer, felt so strongly about the CBRS that she drafted our No Heartbeat Act. The Act follows the guidelines of the 21 states who have passed this law. It focuses on Florida's bill, because of their clear and carefully worded law.

I have watched Erin heal over the last 4 years. She, like so many mothers, would like to have a birth certificate to honor her son, James. Erin will tell you her story.

Erin briefly told her story..highlighting the need for certificate for closure and comfort.

Marcia's Closing: I will close with one brief but poignant story:

{Debbie and Philip Wright delivered full term twin boys in February 2005. Tanner is in this picture, Grant was born still. The couple received a birth certificate for Tanner, but could only obtain a death certificate for Grant. The Wrights would like to be able to obtain a CBRS. A CBRS would bring comfort and closure. } Due to time I did not say this, though we had included this in an earlier briefing with Senator Weber.

Erin's Closing: Help healing happen with a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth.

Give grieving Georgia families closure after the tragic death of their baby.

Honor their child's birth by allowing SB 381 to move forward. Pease vote "yes" for The No Heartbeat Act.