

The No Heartbeat Act

Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth (CBRS)

MISSION:

To give parents who have endured stillbirth the recognition they want for their baby's birth, apart from their death.

I. Background

A. Average of 26,000 stillbirths annually in the US, and 1,100 in Georgia

Georgia has the 7th highest fetal mortality rate in the nation. The CDC is currently conducting a Stillbirth Surveillance Study to better understand the number of stillbirths in the state of Georgia. Additionally, this law could reduce passive reporting of fetal deaths, which leads to confusion in the collection of accurate statistical data. Having accurate record of the number of stillbirths in our state, and nationally, opens more doors for research and prevention.

B. The most commonly used medical definition of stillbirth

"Stillbirth" means an unintended, intrauterine fetal death after a gestational age of not less than 20 completed weeks, or of a fetus with a weight of 350 grams or more. This is the definition used in SB 381.

C. Twenty-one states have a CBRS law

1. Arizona became the first state to ratify a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth Law in 2001. Since that time 20 more states have adopted a CBRS law.
2. The language of SB 381 is substantially similar to the other laws that have passed, particularly South Carolina and Florida.

II. Why Georgia needs "The No Heartbeat Act"

A. Strength of Law

This law would require the Office of Vital Records to issue a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth (in addition to the fetal death certificate) for a stillborn child when: (1) they meet the medical/legal definition of stillbirth; and (2) when a parent named on the fetal death certificate or other eligible person requests such certificate. Parents have the option of requesting a CBRS.

A Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth "Policy and Procedure" statement was reported as being in place in Georgia as of February 13, 2007 by the MISS (Mothers in Sympathy and Support) organization. A link to the document can be found on the MISS website at (<http://www.missingangelsbill.org/>). The document states that the Office of Vital Records will create Certificates of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth upon request of an eligible family member who specifically asks for a CBRS. However, repeated attempts by several different families have been unsuccessful at obtaining this certificate.

To date, this policy is not publically available on the Vital Records website. Codifying Certificate's of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth will ensure that they are permanently available to the families who want to receive one in future years as department personnel changes occur.

B. Recognition

The process and cost of pregnancy, labor, and birth for a live born or stillborn baby are identical. This law offers compassion and support to parents who endure the death and birth of their baby by recognizing the birth event regardless of outcome.

C. Consistency

Today in Georgia, most parents are required to bury their stillborn child, even though there is no recognition by the state of their birth. They are able to obtain a Fetal Death Certificate, without the ability to receive a certificate of the child's birth.

III. Implementation through The Office of Vital Records

A. The CBRS Certificate

SB381 specifies the information to be documented on a CBRS, including the statement, "this is not proof of live birth." A certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth is not to be used to calculate live birth statistics, as it is memorial in nature.

B. Similar process as Birth, Death or Fetal Death Certificate

The Office of Vital Records determines the issuance of Birth, Death and Fetal Death Certificates according to Georgia code. The CBRS uses information from the Fetal Death Certificate.

C. Charge same fee: \$10.00

Each certificate may be obtained under the same fee schedule for live birth certificates, which is \$10 for the first copy, and \$5 for each additional copy.

**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.**

Please vote "yes" for The No Heartbeat Act.

Anyone have any questions...

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