

10 JUL 19 P4 52

SENATE  
S. No. **1594**

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution, Article II, Section 12 provides,

Section 12. The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception.

Stillbirths is a common tragic occurrence which can strike any pregnant woman from the lowest to the highest income bracket, from the educated to the less educated strata of society. In the Philippines, one in forty (1/40) pregnancies results in stillbirths and early neonatal deaths. This is relatively high compared to countries like the United States which records one stillbirth in one hundred fifteen deliveries (1/115).

There is a dearth of information available which can explain the occurrence of stillbirths which can happen even in seemingly normal and healthy pregnancies. This compounds the anguish caused by stillbirths to expecting parents and their family members who had no warning that such a tragedy would occur.

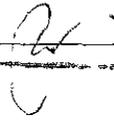
This bill directs the proper government agency to collect information on stillbirths on a national level and provides for information dissemination and research program for the formulation of risk reduction measures.<sup>1</sup>

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

<sup>1</sup> This bill was originally filed in the Fourteenth Congress, Second Regular Session

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S. No. **1594**

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1 AN ACT  
2 PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL COLLECTION OF DATA ON STILLBIRTHS IN A  
3 STANDARDIZED MANNER, PROVIDING FOR INFORMATION AND RESEARCH  
4 PROGRAM ON STILLBIRTHS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES  
5

6 *Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in*  
7 *Congress assembled:*  
8

9 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Stillbirth Awareness and  
10 Research Act."

11 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* -

12 (a) Statistics available from the National Statistics Office on stillbirths and early neonatal  
13 deaths show that approximately one (1) in every forty (40) pregnancies result in  
14 stillbirths. While there can be various possible causes of stillbirths such as cord accidents,  
15 infections, genetic anomalies, among others, the incidence of stillbirth remains  
16 unpredictable and occurs for no determinable medical reason. Presently, risk reduction  
17 measures are not in place so as to protect expecting parents from the emotional anguish  
18 caused by stillbirths and early neonatal deaths.

19 (b) Therefore, a repository of data collected in a standard manner can provide useful  
20 information for the study and analysis of stillbirths and for the formulation of effective  
21 risk reduction measures.

22 (c) This act shall be in accord with the State policy to recognize the sanctity of family life  
23 and to protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall  
24 equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception.  
25

1 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are  
2 defined:

3 (1) “DOH” – shall refer to the Department of Health.

4 (2) “PIA” – Philippine Information Agency

5 (3) “Stillbirth” – Stillbirths are fetal deaths in pregnancies lasting seven or more months

6 SECTION 4. *National Stillbirth Registry* – The State shall establish a National Stillbirth  
7 Registry, the custodian of which shall be the proper government agency competent and able to  
8 maintain such national registry.

9 The National Stillbirth Registry shall serve the following purposes:

10 1. To provide a national repository for reporting and maintaining in a standardized  
11 manner data on stillbirths;

12 2. To make such data available for research on the causes and prevention of  
13 stillbirths;

14 3. The registry shall include information on the stillborn fetus and information on  
15 the mother’s health and pregnancy condition.

16 4. Determination of standard stillbirth definition and protocol.

17 a. The Department of Health (DOH) shall provide for the standard definition  
18 of stillbirth and a standard protocol for stillbirth data collection.

19 b. The Department of Health shall ensure that the standard definition of  
20 stillbirth and the standard protocol described above are developed in a  
21 manner that ensures consultations with representatives from health care  
22 organizations, local government, and other interested parties.

23 SECTION 5. *National Public Awareness Campaign*

1           The Department of Health (DOH) in cooperation with the Philippine Information Agency  
2 (PIA) shall carry out a national campaign to increase public awareness and knowledge of  
3 stillbirths.

4           Activities under the national campaign shall include:

- 5           1. The dissemination of information on measures for mothers to maintain a healthy  
6           pregnancy and assess fetal health;
- 7           2. The dissemination of information on good prenatal care practices such as not  
8           drinking alcohol or smoking; and
- 9           3. The promotion of fetal movement awareness and taking proactive steps to  
10          monitor a baby's movement beginning at approximately 28 weeks into the  
11          pregnancy.

12          SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this  
13 Act, are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

14          SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or  
15 unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain  
16 valid and subsisting.

17          SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive  
18 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent  
19 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

20          SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
21 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

22  
23          Approved,

24          /ctr