

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



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SENATE
S. No. 2830

RECEIVED BY: *J.*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL COLLECTION OF DATA ON STILLBIRTHS
IN A STANDARDIZED MANNER, PROVIDING FOR INFORMATION
AND RESEARCH PROGRAM ON STILLBIRTHS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution, Article 2, 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.¹


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

¹ This bill was originally filed in the Fourteenth Congress, Second Regular Session

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY 

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Stillbirth Awareness
2 and Research Act.”

3 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* –

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

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

14 (c) This act shall be in accord with the State policy to recognize the sanctity of
15 family life and to protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social

1 institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from
2 conception.

3 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

4 (1) “DOH” shall refer to the Department of Health;

5 (2) “PIA” shall refer to the Philippine Information Agency; and

6 (3) “Stillbirth” shall refer to fetal death in pregnancies lasting seven or more
7 months.

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

11 The National Stillbirth Registry shall serve the following purposes:

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

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

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

18 4. Determination of standard stillbirth definition and protocol.

19 a. The DOH shall provide for the standard definition of stillbirth and a
20 standard protocol for stillbirth data collection.

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

1 SECTION 5. *National Public Awareness Campaign.* – The DOH in cooperation
2 with the PIA shall carry out a national campaign to increase public awareness and
3 knowledge of stillbirths.

4 Activities under the national campaign shall include:

- 5 1. The dissemination of information on measures for mothers to maintain a
6 healthy pregnancy and assess fetal health;
- 7 2. The dissemination of information on good prenatal care practices such as
8 not 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
13 of this Act, are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

14 SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
15 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
16 provisions hereof.

17 SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or
18 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
19 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

20 SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
21 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,