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★ HEALTH

Birth certificates for stillborns

Parents who give birth to stillborn children may have the option of getting a birth certificate.

Rep. Karen Klinzing (R-Woodbury) is sponsoring HF947, which is modeled after Arizona's Missing Angels Bill. Currently, parents of stillborns in Minnesota can only receive a death certificate.

"My rationale for supporting this bill is that grief is a really difficult thing for parents dealing with the death of an infant," Klinzing told the House Health Policy and Finance Committee March 30. The committee approved the bill without opposition and referred it to the House floor.

She said a birth certificate recognizes the fact that the mother gave birth and helps families deal with the grief.

"How can a death certificate be given for someone who was never considered born?" asked Candy McVicar, founder of The Missing GRACE Organization. McVicar experienced a stillborn birth on Dec. 20, 2001.

The bill would require those responsible for filing a fetal death report to advise parents that they could request a record of birth, inform them the record is optional and explain how to obtain a record.

Under the bill, the state registrar would be required to prepare and file, within 30 days, a record of birth, upon request.

A companion bill (SF1029), sponsored by Sen. Michele Bachmann (R-Stillwater), awaits action in the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Candy McVicar, founder of The Missing GRACE Organization, gives testimony March 30 before the House Health Policy and Finance Committee on a bill that would provide for an optional record of birth resulting in stillbirth.