

March 23, 2024

Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave, St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee,

I am writing from Andover, Minnesota, to respectfully ask you to support stillbirth prevention in the state of Minnesota. SF 1303 would provide a grant specifically for materials through a program called Count the Kicks that educates expectant patients and their providers on the importance of consistently tracking fetal movement in the third trimester.

Stillbirth is when a baby dies unexpectedly in the womb after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Stillbirth prevention is important to me because my first child, Neville, was stillborn in 2013 at Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids. At 35 weeks his fetal movement changed and decreased. I was the oblivious first-time mom. The importance of fetal movement monitoring and what to do if changes are noticed was not discussed with me at any of my prenatal appointments. If I had known his change in movement was because he was in extreme distress, I would have gone to the hospital immediately and Neville may be here today. It is so wrong that after more than 10 years of being active in the stillbirth community, I continue to meet new stillbirth parents in Minnesota with this same story.

Research has shown that the simple concept of counting kicks can lower preventable stillbirth rates by 10%¹, that's over 30 avoidable stillbirths each year in Minnesota. Minnesota is the only state in the Midwest that does NOT fund these materials. According to the Office of Vital Statistics, more than 360 babies are stillborn every year in Minnesota and racial and economic disparities persist. Thousands of Minnesota families are living without their deeply loved and wanted baby and hundreds more will join them in their grief this year if nothing is done. Since neighboring Iowa implemented this statewide stillbirth prevention program in 2008, its stillbirth rate has gone down more than 30%—in the same time frame, Minnesota's stillbirth rate has increased 10%². Programs like Count the Kicks are easy, cost-effective and equitable. We don't want to see any other families' lives forever altered by the death of their baby. It's time for change. You can help.

Please invest in stillbirth prevention
in Minnesota. Pass SF 1303!

Sincerely,



Alicia Loehlein
Andover, Minnesota



Nearly 11 years ago we left the hospital with just a few mementos and some footprints instead of a living baby. If I had been educated on fetal movement monitoring, Neville would be here.

¹ P. Heazell, A. E., et al., (2023). Information about fetal movements and stillbirth trends: Analysis of time series data. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 130(8), 913-922. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.17426>

² Gregory ECW, Valenzuela CP, Hoyert DL. Fetal mortality: United States, 2020. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 71 no 4. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2022. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:118420>.