

March 24, 2024

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

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

I am writing from Brooklyn Park 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 that educates expectant parents and their providers on the importance of consistently tracking fetal movement in the third trimester.

This is of particular importance to me because my husband and I lost our daughter, Astra, at 38 weeks and delivered her 2 days later, on November 7, 2022. She looked perfect—a fully-formed baby girl, almost 8 pounds.



At 38 weeks, I noticed a lack of movement. I'd heard that babies slow down towards the end of pregnancy due to space restriction, and I assumed everything was fine. The next day, she was still not moving, and we went to the doctor only to learn there was no heartbeat. I will forever wonder what would have happened had we gone in as soon as I noticed a lack of movement. Through the loss community, I have heard several moms in similar situations . . . thinking lack of movement or decreased movement at the end of pregnancy was "normal" only to find out their babies had died.



We now have a newborn son, and we diligently monitored his movements in utero in the hopes that we didn't lose him, too. Losing a baby so close to the end is absolutely devastating. I've been in therapy, support groups, a loss retreat, and more; and while my mental state has improved, we will go the rest of our lives knowing that our family will never be complete, that our family will never be in the same picture, and that our son will never meet his big sister.

Having more education and resources regarding the importance of monitoring fetal movement for both expectant parents and providers may very well help prevent these tragedies for other families. We believe this will be a huge step in decreasing stillbirths and, if necessary, hopefully providing explanations and closure for families that sadly experience them.

Sincerely,

s/ *Elizabeth Duel*
Astra's mom

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