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### **NY State Public Health Crisis Recognized**

*New York State Government Finally Says "YES" to Certificate of Still Birth*

Since 2003, New York families, having experienced the tragedy of stillbirth, have been fighting for the respect and recognition of birth. All states, including New York, require the family to pay for funeral expenses and issue a death certificate. Until now, New York did not offer the choice of a birth certificate. On June 16<sup>th</sup> the New York legislature overwhelmingly passed a bill to provide a certificate of still birth. Bill number A8178a (S3111b) helps provide much-needed comfort, dignity, and documentation to women and their families having experienced a stillbirth. This public health crisis devastates more than 1,700 New York families each year, and more than 30,000 nationwide.

"This bill is pro-women and pro-family; women have the right to know about the prevalence of stillbirth and what they can do to help prevent it," said Michelle Mosca, Founder and President of Angel Names Association. "The bill will increase awareness of stillbirth, and in doing so may stimulate the allotment of research funds to uncover the etiology/ies of stillbirth." In nearly 60% of cases there is no medically discernible reason why stillbirth has occurred.

Stillbirth is defined as an unintended intrauterine death occurring post 20 weeks gestation. "I carried him for nine months," said Lori Tieger Co-Founder of Daniel's STAR. "I left the hospital carrying nothing but my shoes. Although I must mother him differently, there is no difference in the love I have for him as opposed to that for his two sisters. He is just as deserving of a birth certificate."

"Parents across New York State have diligently worked to acquire astounding bi-partisan support from Assembly members and Senators. We were successful in garnering historic support from 98 Assembly members," said Paige Ricci, Founder of NY Still Parents. That support led to overwhelming victories in both houses. About her attendance at the June 16<sup>th</sup> vote Ricci continued, "Watching that board light up green was the perfect end to this struggle." Now the future of the certificate of still birth awaits Governor Cuomo's signature.

"The passage of this bill does not take away the pain, but it does bring some comfort and long overdue joy," said Jeff Tieger Co-Founder of Daniel's STAR. "I realize that just like his sisters, Daniel teaches us, motivates us, inspires us, and makes us better people. The only difference between my son and my daughters is that he is not physically here, but his impact on our lives as parents is just as great. Daniel was born still, but he was still born."

A bereaved mother, and MISS Foundation founder, Dr. Joanne Cacciatore, whose daughter died during birth, on her due date, was the first to introduce similar legislation in Arizona in 2001. When asked her reaction to this week's legislative victory, Cacciatore proudly states. "No other family in New York will ever have to know what it's like to feel that sense of disrespect or indignity or non-recognition."

Mosca said, "On behalf of Angel Names Association and all the New York families, we'd like to thank Assembly members Richard Gottfried, Sandy Galef, Dennis Gabryszak, Senators William Larkin and Tim Kennedy, and all of our sponsors for their continued support. For more information on Certificate of Still Birth go to [www.MISSfoundation.org](http://www.MISSfoundation.org), [www.DanielsSTAR.org](http://www.DanielsSTAR.org), [www.StillParentsNY.webs.com](http://www.StillParentsNY.webs.com), [www.angelnames.org](http://www.angelnames.org).