

Good Morning Chairman Shaffer and members of the committee. I am so thankful for the opportunity to stand before you today to advocate for families who have experienced the devastating loss of a child through stillbirth.

My name is Beth Swartz. I have been a registered nurse in the state of Ohio for 10 years, working in the specialty area of Labor and Delivery at Mount Carmel St. Ann's Hospital for the past 5. During this time, I have sought out additional training in pregnancy and infant loss, even traveling to the International Perinatal Bereavement Conference in 2016. Additionally, I received certification in Perinatal Loss Care through the Hospice and Palliative Care Credentialing Center. I also have the honor of introducing myself as Lydia's nurse. Sadly, Lydia's name could be replaced with many others whom I have cared for.

As a healthcare provider in Labor and Delivery, I have the opportunity to enter into a sacred space where mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and grandparents are actively grieving the loss of a child. With this comes a tremendous responsibility to help my patients create as many memories as possible in the limited time they have with their children. We give our patients the option to parent their children by taking photographs, bathing and dressing their daughter or son, making footprints, reading them books, and singing their favorite songs. While this time in the hospital is difficult, I know the journey ahead is long and arduous.

These families leave this sacred space, only to be challenged with situations where their children are not recognized: The acquaintance who says, "At least you are young. You will have more kids," the denial from their employer for bereavement leave, no birth certificate being issued by the state, and not being able to claim these babies on their taxes. Additionally, they are faced with an immense financial burden: hospital bills, funeral expenses, lost work revenue, are just to name a few.

So I stand before you today as a constituent, a healthcare provider, and Lydia's nurse. Will you join me in advocating for these families? Will you join me in recognizing these children who are lost to stillbirth? Will you join me in easing the financial burdens these families face by moving House Bill 507 forward?

Thank you.