



BARACK OBAMA

U.S. Senator for Illinois



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Washington D.C. Office
 713 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
 (202) 224-2854
 (202) 228-4260 fax
 (202) 228-1404 TDD
[Email our office](#)

Chicago Office
 John C. Kluczynski Federal Office Building
 230 South Dearborn St. Suite 3900 (39th floor)
 Chicago, Illinois 60604
 (312) 886-3506
 (312) 886-3514 fax
 Toll free: (866) 445-2520
 (for IL residents only)

Springfield Office
 607 East Adams Street
 Springfield, Illinois 62701
 (217) 492-5089
 (217) 492-5099 fax

Marion Office
 701 North Court Street
 Marion, Illinois 62959
 (618) 997-2402
 (618) 997-2850 fax

Moline Office
 1911 52nd Avenue
 Moline, Illinois 61265
 (309)736-1217
 (309)736-1233 fax

Obama Introduces Preventing Stillbirth and SUID Act of 2008

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 CONTACT: Michael Ortiz, 202 228 5566

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Bill would establish a national stillbirth registry and promote prevention

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Barack Obama today introduced the Preventing Stillbirth and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Act of 2008, which will enhance public health activities related to understanding and preventing stillbirth and sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUID). Every year, more than 25,000 women in the United States experience stillbirth and roughly 4,500 infants die as a result of SUID. While some of these deaths are a result of known causes, most stillbirths and SUID remain unexplained. Despite these significant rates, there is not a standardized or consistent process for recording these deaths, which impedes prevention efforts and complicates our ability to understand risk factors related to them.

The Obama legislation will standardize and coordinate data and information related to stillbirth and SUID in an effort to improve current prevention strategies for women at risk, as well as facilitate research.

"Every year, too many American families experience the heartbreak of stillbirth and sudden unexpected infant death, and we must do everything we can to work to prevent these tragedies," said Senator Obama. "This important legislation will launch a national registry for both stillbirth and SUID to help facilitate understanding of the root causes, rates, and trends of these deaths. It will also provide every American family with access to information about ways to prevent them. I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this legislation to the Senate floor as soon as possible."

This Act will enhance public activities related to stillbirth by:

- Developing a standard definition of stillbirth in consultation with national health organizations and professional societies with expertise relating to reducing stillbirths and infant mortality.
- Establishing a national registry that can facilitate the understanding of root causes, rates, and trends of stillbirth.
- Developing and enhancing public education and prevention programs aimed at reducing the occurrence of stillbirth.

This Act will enhance public activities related to sudden unexpected infant death by:

- Establishing a population-based SUID case registry that can facilitate the understanding of the root causes, rates, and trends of SUID.
- Facilitating the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data by implementing a surveillance and monitoring system based on thorough and complete death scene investigation data, clinical history, and autopsy findings;
- Collecting standardized information about the environmental, medical, social, and genetic circumstances that may correlate with infant deaths.
- Establishing a standardized classification system for defining subcategories of SIDS and SUID for surveillance and prevention research activities;
- Supporting multidisciplinary infant death reviews such as those performed by child death review committees and fetal infant mortality committees to collect and review the standardized information and accurately and consistently classify and characterize SUID;
- Improving public reporting of surveillance and descriptive epidemiology of SUID by supplementing vital statistics data.

First Candle/SIDS Alliance applauds this legislation and says: "On behalf of the thousands of American families devastated by the sudden, unexpected death of a beloved baby each and every year, First Candle applauds Senator Obama for introducing this groundbreaking bill. Without consistency in defining, investigating and reporting these tragic deaths, families are left searching for answers and there is no hope for a future where these deaths can be prevented."

This legislation is also supported by: American SIDS Institute, American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on SIDS, Babykick Alliance, Global Alliance for the Prevention of Prematurity and Still Birth - Seattle Children's Hospital, Healthy BIRTH Day, International Stillbirth Alliance, Iowa Stillbirth Mothers, National Center for Cultural Competence - Georgetown University, National Stillbirth Society, March of Dimes, and the MISS Foundation.

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