

NEWSRELEASE

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MISS FOUNDATION SUPPORT PROSECUTION FOR LIKELY STILLBIRTH IN PETERSON CASE

Phoenix, Ariz. --- As feminist groups across America publicly denounce the double homicide charges in the Laci and Connor Peterson deaths, the MISS Foundation supports this action by law enforcement.

Presumably, Laci's unborn son was stillborn as a result of the murder: a child she'd already named, "Connor." Yet, the ongoing debate about abortion is interfering with public perception about whether or not Scott Peterson, if he is found guilty, should be punished for the murder of his unborn child.

It has become appallingly apparent that the politics of abortion are further perpetuating the chronic disregard for women and their families experiencing the tragedy of stillbirth. Feminist groups, which often oppose both laws to protect pregnant women against violent acts, and laws which recognize stillbirth as a national tragedy are not liberating women, but rather, they are oppressing an entire group of women. "As self-identified, pro-choice groups, these feminists should be protecting women, truly supporting them, even if their choice was to have their baby and to consider their baby their child at any point during their pregnancy. Feminism and empathy should not be mutually exclusive issues," said Joanne Cacciatore-Garard, MISS Founder. Board member and author, Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross agrees. "It is so simple," she says. "Society must stop the nonsense of politics and understand that Laci's family is grieving two deaths. If he is found to be guilty, then both crimes should be prosecuted."

Part of the ongoing dilemma for stillbirth is in its lack of recognition. All states recognize stillbirth as a death, whether due to naturally occurring causes or unnatural causes such as domestic violence, by issuing a certificate or report of death in order to mandate final disposition. Yet, few states recognize the event as a birth, despite the fact that women must go through the same processes to deliver a baby who has died "in-utero" as a "live birth."

Arizona was the first state to change its law and to issue a certificate of birth for a stillborn infant. In 1999, Cacciatore-Garard, began to lobby for the change in its antediluvian law. “How dare we tell women, ‘Here’s your death certificate, Ma’am, as a constant reminder of your body’s failure. But this is all you get.’ Birth is a mystical experience that cannot be denied. It’s a physiological process. Women enduring stillbirth should receive birth certificates because they gave birth and because it is time for our society to stop hiding these women and their dead babies like family secrets in a dark closet,” said Cacciatore-Garard. Her daughter, Cheyenne, was the first stillborn infant in the United States to receive a birth certificate.

Since Arizona’s law changed, the MISS Foundation has spearheaded the change in seven other states including a liberal-majority Massachusetts. “Some on the far right and far left want to turn this into an abortion debate. But it’s not. We’ve really lost all our logic here in this national debate. Our consciousness is suffering. If this is really about a woman’s right to choose, then let her choose. Some politicians are astute enough to figure that out,” continued Cacciatore-Garard. This law may make it easier in some states to prosecute crimes against women and their unborn child.

The MISS Foundation does not take a position on abortion. “We are neither pro-choice nor anti-abortion,” says Cacciatore-Garard. “However, we are pro-women and we are anti-violence. What happened to Laci Peterson and her son, Connor, is a horrendous, unthinkable crime and feminists should forge a united front to ensure that the perpetrator is prosecuted for both crimes. That is the right thing to do.”

MISS is a nonprofit, volunteer based organization committed to providing emergency support to families in crisis after the death of their infant or young child from any cause. We are here to help families cope with the resultant feelings of overwhelming grief and loss. For more information contact

www.missfoundation.org and www.elisabethkublerross.com.