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NY MISSing Angel's Bill Leader

**New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson Stuns Tens-of Thousands of Bereaved
Parents and Vetoes the MISSing Angels Bill**

Parents nationwide outraged at indifference and ignorance!

Albuquerque, NM. (April 7, 2007)--- Just last month, the New Mexico MISSing Angels Bill (SB17), passed the New Mexico legislature with unanimous, bipartisan support. Yet, today, April 7, 2007, presidential hopeful and Governor Bill Richardson vetoed this important piece of legislation, making New Mexico the first of nearly 30 states to reject the will of its citizens and legislators regarding the way in which the birth of a stillborn baby is recognized and recorded.

The MISSing Angels Bill (SB17) was created to help provide much-needed comfort, dignity, and legal documentation to women and their families experiencing the death of a baby just prior to or during birth. Currently, New Mexico law requires reporting of stillbirth/fetal deaths and demands that families pay funeral costs for their deceased baby, yet provides no acknowledgement that the baby was born. "It's an unthinkable tragedy," says Carin Dhouadi, New Mexico resident and constituent. "I gave birth to a full term baby who died, and the state says I must bury her. But they won't say she was born? How can you die if you never were?"

Joanne Cacciatore, CEO of the MISS Foundation and a PhD Candidate who studies stillbirth, passed the first bill in Arizona in 2001, and has worked to pass it in other states since. She says that families around the nation are outraged at Richardson's move. "Richardson has just flippantly driven a stake through the heart of this legislation that addresses the ultimate woman's issue... Women give birth. And their babies- about one in 100- are dying as a result of stillbirth. He's perpetuating the ignorance," she says.

The change might not seem significant to many. However, to those who have experienced the anguish of losing a baby – SB17 is an important step in allowing

grieving parents the same respect given to the woman leaving the hospital with a healthy infant in her arms. “This bill had support from everyone, including pro-choice legislators like Representatives Gail Chasey and Mimi Stewart, who understand this as an important woman’s issue,” said Halo Golden, volunteer lobbyist for the NM bill and the mother of a stillborn baby. Richard Olsen of the National Stillbirth Society believes that this move was ‘political pandering’, stating that the “governor’s veto is an insensitive act that marginalizes women and ignores the interests of his own constituents in favor of his presidential aspirations.”

Cacciatore agrees, saying, “Richardson just vetoed a critical woman’s issue, for no sound reason, and with unilateral authority...Is this the type of person we can trust to represent women’s interests across America? Richardson won’t get the votes of hundreds of thousands of our grieving parents across the country...The vetoing of this bill is a ham handed misjudgment on the governor’s part.”

“He clearly doesn’t understand this bill, and didn’t take the time to inform himself. It’s shameful. He’s slapped grieving mothers and father in the face, not just in New Mexico, but across the country,” says Daryl Logullo, National Legislative Liaison for the MISS Foundation. “He owes them, and the people of the state, an immediate apology and a commitment to this important law that parents dearly want.”

Approximately 30,000 babies are stillborn each year in the United States. The cause of death for more than half the number of full-term (40-week) stillbirths is unknown, even after autopsy.

The MISS Foundation and the National Stillbirth Society are getting ready to launch an awareness campaign targeted at educating the governor so he wholly understands the issue. The organizations are also calling for the governor to request a special session to address it and issue an apology to bereaved parents whose babies were stillborn. For more information on the MISSING Angels Bill visit

www.missingangelsbill.org or www.missfoundation.org.