

# NEWS

---

---

*... from the Illinois House of Representatives*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 24, 2005

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

State Rep. Karen May  
Springfield – (217) 782-0902  
Highland Park – (847) 831-5858

## **May Legislation Allowing Mothers of Deceased Children to Obtain Clean Birth Certificates Clears House**

SPRINGFIELD – Legislation sponsored by State Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park) that would enable a mother who lost her newborn to receive a clean copy of their birth certificates death passed the House unanimously last Friday.

“This is an issue that touched an emotional chord with a lot of lawmakers in Springfield,” May said. “After being contacted at my town hall meeting about this problem, I knew that the state could be more sensitive at a very difficult time. We should not give grieving mothers a document that concentrates on their children’s death rather than reminding them of their life.”

Senate Bill 568 was inspired by the story of Doris Virginia Sewell, whose mother Irene Sewell of Glenview pushed for the bill. Mrs. Sewell’s daughter died only two days after her birth. When Sewell requested a copy of her daughter’s birth certificate, she was issued a copy with the word “deceased” stamped on it, as required by state law.

May’s legislation allow a mother to obtain a clean copy of their child’s birth certificate up to nine months after a child’s death. This copy, which can only be obtained by the mother, would make no reference to the death.

“I’m glad that the General Assembly was able to help Mrs. Sewell and all of the other parents who are put in this difficult and unfortunate circumstance,” May said. “This is the compassionate thing to do. I urge the Governor to quickly sign this bill and help, even if only a little, in easing the suffering of grieving parents.”

Rep. May serves the 58<sup>th</sup> District, which includes all or portions of Deerfield, Highwood, Lake Forest, Highland Park, Riverwoods, Glencoe, Northbrook and Lake Bluff.

###