

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 19, 2003

LB 95

journal. So now we have the wife, Michelle, addressing the unborn child: Today, I found out that there is no hope for you to stay with us this time. My body already knows it too. Despite the fact that I am devastated by this news, I have to thank you for visiting. You made me feel so good about myself and confident that everything was going to be all right. On the other hand, losing you is the most painful thing I've ever gone through and I don't know how I could ever get over it. Your body is still inside me, but I know you've already left. And then on the next page the husband, Shannon, offers a short entry from his own journal: I hope I get another chance to know you. I am here, I won't forget and you always have a home with me. And then back to Shannon's letter: After two weeks, the health of my wife was now on the line and, lacking the presence of a heartbeat, we agreed to have the remains removed from her womb. We asked to keep the remains. We were told that it was against hospital policy and the remains must be destroyed as medical waste. We objected at first, then submitted to the policies, unable to fight in our condition. The remains were taken. We were left to be alone in our grief. A month later an entry my wife made in her journal showed that she felt the baby had been taken away from her and that she had failed our child. Our love for our child did not die when he died, and we are not alone in the feelings that follow an event such as this. We believe that this law can make this process easier on parents who will have to endure such a loss in the future. With the passing of this law, parents who have suffered the death of their children through miscarriage or stillbirth will be allowed the right to those remains, so that they may have some manner of closure in whatever way they see fit. It is a good law. It is, at its heart, a law that provides for the rights of parents without taking away rights from others. And again, that was Shannon Saltzman, the husband of Michelle and the father of the child. And so they approached me and that was the impetus for LB 95. I understand that different people have different views on when life begins and whether you've lost a child or you haven't lost a child when a miscarriage happens. This bill is not an attempt to resolve that debate. This bill simply means that if you do believe that you have lost a child, you ought to be able to claim the remains. You ought to be able to treat the remains as something other than medical waste. And by the way, when I say