

Senate HELP Committee approves Sudden Death Data Enhancement and Awareness Act (S.2746/H.R.669)

WASHINGTON, D.C., Nov. 20, 2014 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The SUDC Foundation applauds the Senate’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee on their passage of the Sudden Unexpected Death Data Enhancement and Awareness Act (S.2746/H.R.669).

Every year, approximately 30,000 families in the U.S. are affected by Stillbirth, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death or Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC). SUDC is defined as the sudden death of a child greater than 1 year of age that remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the child’s medical history (Krous 2005).

Although seemingly rare due to its lack of awareness, the CDC ranks sudden deaths of children aged 1-4 years where a cause of death could not be determined as the 5th leading cause of death for this age group (CDC wonder database 2011). SUDC can occur throughout childhood.

“It is a tragedy that most people are unaware of,” states Laura Crandall, President and Cofounder of the SUDC Foundation who lost her 15 month old daughter Maria to SUDC. “We hear about sudden infant death and how to reduce to the risk by having your baby sleep on their backs and other safe sleep measures – but no one seems to talk about sudden unexplained deaths after the first birthday. These are thriving, happy children whose deaths shock everyone around them and this shock is only worsened when a lengthy investigation yields no further understanding.”

“Education and awareness are critical to components of combating this threat, and we must ensure that doctors and researchers have the information necessary to make meaningful progress in improving prevention efforts. Today’s vote from the HELP Committee is a promising step forward,” Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) said. “I thank the Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood Foundation and the brave parents who have spoken out about their experiences for their advocacy on this issue.”

The Sudden Unexpected Death Data Enhancement and Awareness Act (S.2746/H.R.669) would amend the Public Health Service Act to help enhance awareness about unexpected sudden death in early life. The legislation would provide for consistent data collection related to stillbirths and sudden, unexpected deaths in both infants and children. By better understanding the causes of unexpected sudden death, we can do more to improve the health of all infants and children.

“Nothing is more devastating for a parent than the loss of child, but it is even more painful to lose a child without understanding how or why such a

tragedy occurred,” said Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH). “By improving efforts to promote better collaboration, enhance data collection, and disseminate information to the public and stakeholders in the medical and law enforcement communities, we can work to ensure that fewer parents experience the heartbreaking loss of a child.”

“The HELP Committee’s approval of this bill brings comfort to the many families who have experienced these inexplicable tragedies. It gives hope, that some day we will be able to understand and prevent these heartbreaking deaths,” said Lorri Caffrey, Assistant Executive Director of the SUDC Foundation and SUDC parent.

S2746 was introduced in July 2014 by Senator Brown (D-OH) and Senate Ayotte (R-NH). Upon passing the House in September, the Senate has taken efforts to evaluate and act on the bill through the HELP committee process under the leadership of Senator Harkin (D-IA) and Senator Alexander (R-TN). It now awaits a vote of the full Senate.

For more information: <http://www.sudc.org/>.

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