



STAR LEGACY
FOUNDATION

OBTAINING A PROCLAMATION

For Pregnancy and Infant Loss

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Are you looking for a great project for your Chapter to raise awareness in your community? Request a proclamation for your community to designate a day/month in recognition of pregnancy and infant loss!

History of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month

In 1988, President Ronald Regan proclaimed October as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month [Proclamation 5890]. The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness movement had begun!

Tragically approximately a million pregnancies yearly in the United States end in early pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or the death of the newborn child. In October, Star Legacy Foundation will conduct numerous activities to honor and remember all of the sweet babies that have gone far too soon.

The loss of a child stays with parents, friends, and family members forever, but it can be challenging for others to truly understand the emotional and physical impact. Events across the country take place each October and help people to better empathize and support parents on their journey to hope. Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month enables us to consider how, as individuals and communities, we can meet the needs of bereaved parents and family members and work to prevent causes of these problems.

In 2002, the October 15th Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day Campaign began as an American movement. Robyn Bear, Lisa Brown, and Tammy Novak petitioned the federal government as well as the governors of each of the 50 states resulting in 20 signing proclamations recognizing October 15, 2002, as the first observance of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. The House of Representatives passed Concurrent Resolution H.Con>RES.222 on September 28, 2006, supporting the goals and ideals represented by the observance.

Around the world, other countries observe the day on October 15th. For example, Canadian provinces and territories have officially proclaimed the awareness day. And in recent years, the United Kingdom, Western Australia, New South Wales, and Italy have joined the movement.

What is a proclamation?

A proclamation is an official designation of an event. Proclamations are a great way to educate the public about pregnancy and infant loss and bring attention to our cause. A proclamation is an effective tool for gaining public recognition because it carries the full support of a key government official in your state or community. Pursuing annual proclamations provides opportunities to continue the platform to raise awareness and to bring together families impacted by these tragedies. Proclamations are not law or have any legal standing, but they can be an annual event and a very useful tool in raising awareness.

Step 1: Contact the State or Local Government Office

Governors, county executives, mayors, state legislatures, municipalities, counties, cities or towns can issue proclamations.

- For city proclamations, a mayor, city manager or city marshal may be the person to sign.
- For counties, it will most likely be the county commissioners.
- You do not have to have both the city and county proclamations; you can decide which entity in your community would reach more people.
- For state proclamations, the Governor would be the person to issue and sign a proclamation.



STAR LEGACY FOUNDATION

Determine whether you would like to request a proclamation from your city, county or state and locate the website for this entity. On the website, you may find a tab called “Ceremonial” or “Forms,” under which the proclamation request guidelines may be located. Otherwise, use the site’s search feature and type in the word “proclamation.” Another option is to look on the “Contact Us” tab. This page may allow you to write a brief message, such as:

How do I ask the (Mayor, commissioner, Governor) to issue a proclamation declaring [date] as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month/Week/Day?

In addition to seeking the specific guidelines for requesting a proclamation, be sure to inquire about the preferred format. This information will allow you to begin to draft an effective proclamation.

Step 2: Draft your Proclamation

There are two styles to choose from when writing your proclamation: traditional and modern. They differ in format; however, the purpose is the same and they are equally effective. While the traditional format is the most frequently used, be sure to clarify which style is preferred with your local official prior to drafting your proclamation.

Traditional proclamations begin with a series of statements starting with the words “whereas,” meaning “because,” “inasmuch” or “since.” Each clause states the problem or issue being addressed and is followed by a concluding phrase beginning with “therefore,” which specifically requests the support or action needed. Modern proclamations are written in a letter format.

A sample of a traditional proclamation is provided (Attachment B) in order to assist you with drafting your proclamation. Modify this sample proclamation by inserting information about the nature of the issue in your community and by providing local statistics.

Follow the guidelines you receive from your government office. Be prepared to have an electronic version of your proclamation available. Most offices will print the proclamation on official letterhead or certificate paper, therefore, sending them an electronic version is usually requested.

Step 3: Follow the Guidelines for Submitting a Proclamation Request

Each city, county and state will have their own guidelines and procedures for signing proclamations. The easiest way to research your city, county or state’s guidelines is to look on its website and search for the term “proclamation.” Some of the larger cities and counties will have proclamation guidelines listed. Smaller cities and counties may provide contact information on the website to call or email for proclamation information.

Oftentimes a cover letter requesting the proclamation is required. We have provided a sample cover letter written to a city, county or state’s government office in request of a proclamation (attachment A).

In order to expedite the process, the following information is usually required when submitting a proclamation request:

- A draft text of the proclamation in the preferred format
- The purpose of the proclamation - Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month/Week/Day
- The date when the proclamation is needed
- A brief history of your organization



- The name and daytime telephone number and/or email address of the local contact person

Step 4: Allow Enough Time

The wheels of government turn slowly, so be sure to begin the proclamation request process at least two to three months or more in advance of your event date or as soon as possible. Timing is key if you want to be able to have the proclamation announced at a city council or county commissioner meeting or at a special ceremony with state dignitaries.

You may be required to send a copy of the proclamation to these representatives two to eight weeks ahead of the meeting, depending on the size of your city or county. Keep in mind that some legislatures are not in session during the summer (particularly in August), so you may need to build in extra time to find a local official who can sign your proclamation. Do not hesitate to follow up to check the status of your proclamation and upon doing so, offer to provide any additional information the official may need.

Step 5: Make an Event Out of It!

Again, follow the guidelines that you are given as to whom (and how many) you can bring to the proclamation meeting or signing event. Notify your local paper or media outlets about the proclamation. Send out a press release including copies of the proclamation and any photos. Contact Star Legacy Foundation's national office for assistance in preparation and distribution of a press release. As with any media piece, demonstrate its importance to the media's audience by including local statistics. In addition, if you are holding any event related to Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day/Week/Month, be sure to give the details in your press release. You may be contacted by the media to do an interview as well.

Don't forget to tell the world about your proclamation via social media, newsletters and any opportunity to get the word out and raise awareness!

Beyond the proclamation ceremony, October is a good time to bring families and other constituents for additional activities. Some activities to consider include: runs/walks, candle vigils, building/bridge lighting, recognition for health professionals and more.

Step 6: We're here to help!

Be sure to share the progress of your project with our Outreach/Awareness Coordinator, Amy Kent. We will help with publicity and more at the national office.

These are very general guidelines to get you started. Don't hesitate to reach out to us along the way if you have questions.



Attachment A: Sample Cover Letter to Local Officials in Request of a Proclamation

Use this sample cover letter when you mail the proposed proclamation wording. If you have already spoken to the proper official, then you should reference that conversation in this letter. Also, adjust the language of the letter to reflect the details of the event in your community. Be sure to enclose your proclamation draft with your letter.

[Date]

Honorable [Name] [Official Title]
[Mailing Address]

Dear [Name],

October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. This month provides an excellent opportunity for our [City / County / State] to demonstrate its support in raising awareness of pregnancy and infant loss; research to prevent these terrible tragedies and support for bereaved families. Moreover, it is a wonderful opportunity to educate the public on the magnitude of pregnancy and infant loss as has been a 'taboo' topic for decades. Star Legacy Foundation would be honored if you would sponsor an official proclamation to recognize October 2021 as Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month in [City/County/State].

Each year, 1 in 4 pregnancies ends in tragedy including countless miscarriages, More than 24,000 babies are stillborn and another 21,000 do not live to see their first birthday. The fetal and infant death rates for Black families is double that of other races. We believe that many of these tragedies could be prevented and the bereaved families deserve the very best in bereavement support and care. (Include state specific data if available)

Your proclamation would lend official recognition to the important work of educating the public on pregnancy & infant loss as well as emphasize your personal commitment to raising awareness about the risks for such tragedies.

I have enclosed a sample proclamation which may help your office compose the appropriate proclamation for [City/County/State].

[Insert the following paragraph if you are sponsoring a public awareness event.] Star Legacy Foundation is sponsoring [describe event] on [day] at [time] at [location]. We hope you will attend this special event to present your proclamation. If you are unable to attend, we ask that you or your official representative read the proclamation to our supporters on [day of the event].

If you or your staff have any questions concerning the request, the sample proclamation or Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, please call me at [telephone number]. I will follow up with your office regarding this request in the next few days. As always, we appreciate your support of Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month. Thank you for your consideration of this special request.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Enclosure: Sample Proclamation Language



Attachment B: Sample Proclamation

Office of the (Official)
PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS Pregnancy and Infant Loss is such a common occurrence, one that is usually not recognized, AND

WHEREAS many <city/county/state> parents and families have suffered a miscarriage, a stillbirth or the death of an infant during delivery or shortly after birth, AND

WHEREAS this devastating tragedy often occurs suddenly, without warning, as a result of miscarriage, stillbirth, preterm birth, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), accident, or other causes or complications; AND

WHEREAS <city/county/state> wishes to acknowledge the profound grief experienced by families who suffer the death of a baby; AND

WHEREAS <city/county/state> wishes to acknowledge the existence of the babies and infants that died far too early; AND

WHEREAS even the shortest lives are still valuable, and the grief of those who mourn the loss of these lives should not be trivialized; AND

WHEREAS the 15th day of October is recognized in parts of the United States and in many other jurisdictions around the world, as a day of remembrance and awareness of pregnancy and infant loss; AND

WHEREAS the tragedy of pregnancy and infant loss, which exacts a terrible emotional toll, may be preventable in some instances; AND

WHEREAS increased awareness of the causes and impacts surrounding pregnancy and infant loss may lead to greater understanding, support and resources in communities across the <city/county/state>; AND

WHEREAS a month of remembrance honours the lives of children taken far too soon and supports grieving parents, grandparents, siblings and other family members whose lives are forever altered by the heartbreak of losing a child;

WHEREAS those parents and families require support and understanding during their time of grief, and

WHEREAS promoting awareness of the challenges faced by those parents and families is a positive means of establishing support and understanding, and

WHEREAS recognizing Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness/Remembrance Month would enable the people of (city/county/state) to consider how, as individuals and communities, they can meet the needs of bereaved mothers, fathers, and family members, and work to prevent the causes of these deaths;



WHEREAS, The Star Legacy Foundation invites all residents of (city/county/state) to participate in (NAME OF EVENT).

NOW, THEREFORE, I, (Official Name), (Official's title) do hereby proclaim October 2020 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month in (city/county/state) and encourage parents, caregivers and all residents to become educated in opportunities to prevent pregnancy and infant loss and support bereaved families when prevention is not possible;

IN TESTIMONY WHERE OF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of (city/county/state), this [__st/th] day of (month and year).

SEAL

Official's Name and title