

Florida House Calls for Justice in Infant Murder Case

The Florida House of Representatives issued a letter today calling on State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle to seek justice for an infant born alive then killed at a Miami-area abortion clinic.

✖ **Feb. 20, 2009** – Members of the Florida House of Representatives issued a letter today calling on State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle to seek justice for an infant who was born alive at a Hialeah, Fla., abortion clinic and allegedly killed when a staffer put her into a plastic bag and threw her in the trash.

The letter, signed by 44 representatives, stopped short of calling for murder charges to be filed against the staff of A GYN Diagnostic Center. But it said the 23-week-old baby's life was "callously and inhumanely taken from her with no regard for basic human decency or her own medical needs."

"We want to do all we can to prevent this kind of morally reprehensible act from ever occurring," the letter stated, "and want to provide you with the necessary tools to seek justice in a timely manner when it does occur." (Read entire letter.)

The baby, Shanice Denise Osbourne, was born alive at 23 weeks during a botched abortion on July 20, 2006. Her mother, Syccloria Williams, said she had received abortion-inducing medication the previous day. But after waiting hours for Dr. Pierre Jean-Jacque Renelique to arrive for her scheduled abortion, she delivered the baby on her own, according to a civil lawsuit filed in January against the clinic, the doctor and the staff.

Unlicensed clinic co-owner Belkis Gonzalez then cut the baby's

umbilical cord with a pair of scissors and placed the live infant, placenta and afterbirth in a biohazard bag, which she sealed and threw in the trash, the suit said. Williams said clinic staff did not call 911 or seek medical attention for her or the baby.

An autopsy showed the baby had filled her lungs with air prior to death. The representatives' letter to the state attorney noted that babies born at 23 weeks of development have a chance to survive with appropriate medical care.

The Florida Medical Board revoked Renelique's medical license earlier this month, finding that he falsified medical records, delegated tasks to unlicensed personnel and committed malpractice.

But several members of the House Republican Caucus say revoking Renelique's license is not enough. "Whether you are pro-life or pro-choice, we can all agree that this is tragic and morally reprehensible," said House Majority Leader Adam Hasner, R-Delray Beach, earlier this month. "Administrative action against the physician by the Department of Health is not enough, anything less than murder charges being filed is unacceptable."

Deputy Majority Leader Anitere Flores, state Rep. Stephen Precourt of Orlando, Rep. Rachel Burgin of Brandon and Rep. Scott Plakon of Longwood joined Hasner in calling for criminal charges to be filed against Renelique and others responsible for the baby's death.

"Whether someone lives a few breaths or a few million, innocent life should be treated the same," said Plakon, who also signed the letter issued today. "In this case it appears, from the evidence, that it was not."

The state attorney's office has said its criminal investigation into the incident is ongoing.