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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 136 Session of  
1993

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INTRODUCED BY ROBINSON AND MILLER, FEBRUARY 1, 1993

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, FEBRUARY 1, 1993

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AN ACT

1 Requiring coroners and medical examiners to perform autopsies  
2 and investigations in certain cases; and requiring review.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Procedure in case of certain deaths.

6 (a) Report and notification.--When a live-born person under  
7 the age of three years dies under circumstances in which death  
8 is not anticipated or when a live-born person under the age of  
9 three years is found dead, cause unknown, that death shall  
10 immediately be reported to the coroner or medical examiner of  
11 the county in which the person died and an autopsy shall be  
12 performed. When the coroner or medical examiner receives notice  
13 of the death, the coroner or medical examiner shall inform the  
14 parent or legal guardian of the deceased that an autopsy will be  
15 performed. The coroner or medical examiner shall notify the  
16 parent or legal guardian of the cause of death as soon as  
17 possible after the completion of the autopsy.

1 (b) Autopsy and review.--The coroner or medical examiner  
2 shall not make a determination of death if the cause of death is  
3 unknown, unless an autopsy, including microscopic examination,  
4 is performed, an investigation of the death scene is conducted  
5 and review of the child's medical history is made.

6 (c) Filing of the autopsy and investigative report.--The  
7 coroner or medical examiner shall file a copy of the autopsy and  
8 investigative report with the Department of Health, and the  
9 report shall remain confidential.

10 (d) Random review of autopsies and report.--Once a year, a  
11 panel shall be convened. The panel shall consist of the  
12 Secretary of Health, who shall act as chairman; the Attorney  
13 General; the Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police; and  
14 six members appointed by the Governor representing district  
15 attorneys, coroners, pathologists, medical examiners, chiefs of  
16 police and pediatricians. The panel shall conduct a random  
17 review of a minimum of 20% of the autopsies performed under this  
18 act. The panel shall submit a report with its findings and  
19 recommendations to the Coroner's Education Board.

20 Section 2. Effective date.

21 This act shall take effect in 60 days.