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World

French Court Rules Parents Can Name Fetuses

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Morning Edition, February 25, 2008 - France's high court has ruled that parents have the right to officially name, register and bury a fetus that is stillborn or miscarried regardless of its stage of development.

Parents say the ruling will allow them to deal with their loss. They say their loss has been compounded by their inability to register the death or keep the fetus for burial.

But critics say it chips away at abortion rights because it puts no age limit on when a fetus can receive a name and a burial.

Before the ruling only a fetus that had developed beyond the 22nd week of pregnancy could be legally recognized in France. That standard is based on the World Health Organization's definition that a fetus is viable after 22 weeks of pregnancy.

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