

My Summer with Saul's Light

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This summer I had the wonderful opportunity to work with Saul's Light Foundation. I have been so inspired by this organization and its executive director and founder (and my supervisor), Kimberly Novod. I started my internship this summer by helping with the final stretch of working on passing Bill 146, which is now law as Act 467! Act 467 was authored by Representative Stephanie Hilferty, and it establishes an income tax credit for parents of stillborn babies. We are currently working on preparing for our NICU Health & Equity Summit, which will be on September 23,

2021. The goal of this summit is to bring together community members to learn about and discuss equitable, family-centered care in Louisiana's NICUs.

Throughout my internship, I saw the importance of community organizing and how it takes many people working together to get things done. In working on the stillbirth tax credit bill, Saul's Light worked closely with Rep. Hilferty, parent advocates, community leaders in other states who had passed similar bills, and many more. I started at Saul's Light during the tail end of this initiative, and I only caught a glimpse of all the work and people behind this bill, but I could tell how much time, effort, and care went into it all. Something I discussed with Kimberly is how there was some disagreement and hesitancy regarding the bill due to some of its language suggesting a pro-life stance. However, we also saw that the parent advocates and others working on this bill all had different opinions regarding abortion, politics, and other topics. Regardless, they all put aside those differences to work on their common goals of passing the stillbirth tax credit bill, supporting families, and honoring stillborn babies. This showed me that we all have our differences, and there is no way that we can all agree on everything, but when we have a common goal and work together, we can make great things happen.

I have learned a lot about reproductive justice and community organizing this summer, and I look forward to continuing my work with Saul's Light.