



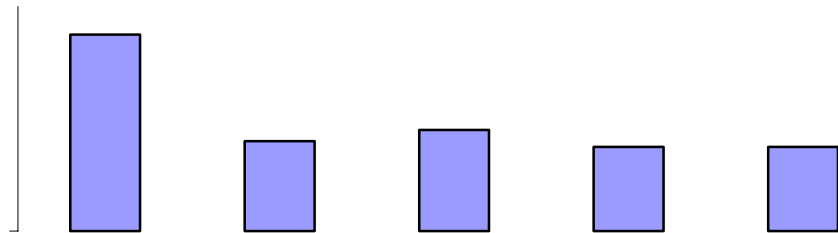
The Vermont Legislative Research Shop

Baby Safe Haven Legislation

Baby Safe Havens (also known as Baby Moses, Safe Place for Newborns, and Safe Arms for Newborns)¹ are legislative programs that allow mothers who might otherwise abandon their children illegally in unsafe places to instead legally abandon their

information is available pertaining to the risk factors for baby abandonment, as psychologists have yet to pinpoint what kind of parent is most likely to abandon their baby, other than that most mothers are in their late teens. Currently there is no evidence that links abandonment to mental illness or drug addiction.⁷ Furthermore, there is no evidence, at this point in time, to support that the establishment of safe haven legislation affects the rates of illegal infant abandonment.⁸

Figure 1 illustrates the number of states that have deemed various locations “Safe Havens.” As may be seen, the vast majority limits the label to strictly hospitals, due to the ability of the staff to attend to newborns. Other locations include churches, pregnancy crisis centers, child advocacy centers, birthing centers, physicians’ offices, community health clinics, and walk-in clinics, as well as with 911 responders and social service workers.⁹ For a complete listing of individual state actions, see Appendix A.



any more babies.” Colorado’s baby safe haven law was passed five years ago and since then 9 babies have been abandoned and died and 12 have been left at safe haven locations. Owens hopes that further education and outreach to schools regarding the law will help mothers make better decisions rather than panicking and abandoning the baby.¹¹

Bronx, New York: A woman recently tossed her newborn baby out of the window. This led many proponents of the Baby Safe Haven Program to discuss the need for further awareness of the program. “Tim Jaccard, director of the Baby Safe Haven Program, which runs a 24-hour hotline, (877) 796-HOPE. “We’ve got to get the message out that there are other alternatives to what is going on.” Jaccard said the law needs to be publicized – on television and radio, in school nurses’ offices and through posters in local stores.” He also discusses the need to be particularly aware and push the program harder in February and March because that is when the highest rate of neonaticides occurs. This is due to conception during spring proms, spring break and the summer.¹²

Wisconsin’s Safe Haven Legislation was created three years ago and has been used 21 times throughout the state. The Wisconsin safe haven agency says that the average age of women utilizing the law are 19 years old¹³

California: activist Debi Faris-Cifeli founded The Garden of Angels, Inc, a non-profit organization, in 1996.¹⁴ In January of 2001, the state of California launched its baby safe haven legislation and since then The Garden has “launched an educational campaign which includes public service announcements and print ads, plus an “educational video” designed to reach out to our young people in our schools.”¹⁵ The organization is running multiple fundraisers in order to fund the program, including a “baby bottle challenge” in which old baby bottles full of change are collected, a sale of engraved bricks within a sidewalk, joining non-profit E-bay networks, and through reaching out to Sunday Schools.¹⁶

Educational Provisions

As of 2001, thirteen states’ safe haven laws made provisions for educational programs to assist in informing the public of the existence and specific provisions of their baby safe haven legislation. One example, New Jersey, requires an educational program including a free 24-hour hotline. As a result, the law also provided \$500,000 for the program.¹⁷

¹¹ Bill Scanlon. “First Lady Highlights Safe Haven Law with Baby Day.” April 14, 2005. *Rocky Mountain News*. P. 30A.

¹² Lisa L. Colangelo and Nancy Dillion. “Safe Haven Law Could Have Averted Tragedy.” January 18, 2005. *Daily News*. P. 8.

¹³ Georgia Pabst. “2 Newborns Given up at Hospital in West Allis under Safe Haven law.” July 15, 2004. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. P. 1B.

¹⁴ Debi Faris-Cifeli. “From the Heart...” No date specified. www.gardenofangels.org. Accessed April 19, 2005.

¹⁵ Safe Arms For Newborns. “Safe Arms for Newborns and California Senate Bill 1368 Works to Prevent Abandoned/Discarded Newborns.” No date specified. <http://www.gardenofangels.org/Safe%20Arms.htm>. Accessed April 19, 2005.

¹⁶ Safe Arms For Newborns.

¹⁷ Nina Williams-Mbengue. “Analysis of State Actions on Important Issues: Safe Havens for Abandoned Infants.” September 2001. *NCSL State Legislative Report*. <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/slr268.html> Accessed April 19, 2005.

Concerns about Safe Haven Legislation

Impact on the Father's Rights: According to Ian Bolling of the National Center for Fathering, "Safe Haven legislation is a double-edged sword. While it may seem to protect the child, it also removes the father's right to be involved in the child's life. This can be particularly harmful for fathers who are already struggling with their role in the family." (Bolling, 2015)

Š Providing confidential course

Appendix A

New Mexico	2001	up to 90 days	X				
New York	2000	up to 5 days	X		X	X	http://www.amtchildrenofhope.org/
North Carolina	2003	up to 7 days	X	X		X	
North Dakota	2001	up to 1 year	X				
Ohio	2000	up to 72 hours	X	X		X	
Oklahoma	2001	up to 7 days	X		X	X	
Oregon	2003	up to 30 days	X		X		
Pennsylvania	2002	up to 28 days	X		X	X	http://www.ahandtohold.org/index.htm
South Carolina	2000	up to 30 days	X				
South Dakota	2001	up to 60 days		X			
Tennessee	2001	up to 72 hours	X				
Texas	1999	up to 30 days		X			http://www.babymosesproject.org/B&P.htm
Utah	2001	up to 30 days	X				
Vermont	<i>None</i>						
Virginia	2003	up to 14 days	X	X			
Washington	2002	up to 72 hours	X		X		
West Virginia	2000	up to 72 hours	X				
Wisconsin	2001	up to 72 hours	X	X		X	

Source: Robyn's Nest. "Safe Haven Legislation." 2005. Nybor, LLC. <http://www.robysnest.com/statesafehaven.htm>. Accessed April 12, 2005.