

FAVORABLE.SB873.HB1323.LauraBogley.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Bogley

Position: FAV



Support Statement SB873/HB1323

Courts – Immunity from Liability – Maryland Safe Haven Program

Laura Bogley, JD

Executive Director, Maryland Right to Life

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Maryland Right to Life, I strongly support this bill which will empower Maryland women to choose life for their children. The bill would modernize Maryland's Safe Haven law and would enable the state to better serve the needs of vulnerable infants and mothers in crisis.

State legislatures began enacting Safe Haven or "Baby Moses" laws in 1999 to address a reported increase in infant abandonment and infanticide. Safe Haven laws have bipartisan support and have been enacted by all fifty states, including Maryland. Safe Haven Laws have proven to be an effective solution for preventing the wrongful and illegal harm or death of newborn infants. Since 1999, 4,718 newborn babies and counting have been saved.

These laws serve as an incentive for mothers in crisis to safely relinquish their babies to designated locations where the babies are protected and provided with medical care until a permanent home is found. Safe haven laws generally allow the parent, or an agent of the parent, to remain anonymous and to be shielded from prosecution for abandonment or neglect in exchange for surrendering the baby to a safe haven. Safe haven laws also provide legal protections for providers at designated facilities for anything that might happen to the infant while in their care, unless there is evidence of major negligence on the part of the provider.

The Maryland General Assembly enacted the Maryland Safe Haven law and established the Maryland Safe Haven Program in 2002. The Maryland Safe Haven Program was established and is administered by the Maryland Department of Human Services. According to reports from the Maryland Department of Human Services, the Maryland Safe Haven Program is underutilized, with no newborns saved in the last few years. Unfortunately, as recently as July 2021, babies continue to be abandoned in Maryland illegally and their mothers prosecuted for the neglect or death of their child. We believe that if the Maryland Safe Haven Program was more accessible, that these mothers most likely would have safely relinquished their children to responsible adults without harm.

This bill would modernize the current Maryland Safe Haven law and related Maryland Safe Haven Program, within existing budget appropriations, and increase accessibility of the program by enacting the following enhancements:

1. The bill would increase the utilization and accessibility of the Safe Haven Program by increasing the time allowance under which a mother may safely relinquish her child from 10

days to 60 days. Labor and delivery can be traumatic experiences for women, particularly when a woman has no support system or gives birth under duress. The state should afford women more time to make critical decisions for the benefit their children and to avoid prosecution.

The **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** include “newborn” under the definition of “infant” which is the period from birth to one-year of age.

Incidents of illegal abandonment in Maryland demonstrate the need for a longer period for women to make the critical decision to relinquish their newborns up to two-months of age. (See attached article *“Mother of Abandoned Baby on Road Pleads Guilty”*.)

Model legislation for Safe Haven Programs now recommends a time allowance of sixty (60) days for a mother to safely relinquish her infant under the Safe Haven Law.

2. The bill would clarify for regulatory purposes that a “Designated Facility” under the Safe Haven law, includes a professional or volunteer fire company that is insured. Fire companies already have served as “responsible adults” for the purpose of the Safe Haven law, to whom a mother can safely relinquish her infant without fear of prosecution. (See article *“Maryland Fire/EMS Station Serves as Safe Haven for “Baby Craig”*”.)
3. The bill would modernize the current Safe Haven law by allowing designated facilities to utilize a newborn safety device to provide women a truly anonymous option. These secure devices, typically referred to as “baby boxes” compliment existing Safe Haven Programs and give designated facilities another tool to be successful in saving lives.

Baby boxes have existed in one form or another for centuries. Modern versions appear in the United States and other countries, including Germany, Switzerland, Pakistan and Malaysia. Baby boxes are not medical devices and do not require FDA approval.

Tax dollars are not used to pay for Safe Haven Baby Boxes. Funding comes fully from private donors, fundraising campaigns or other organizations. This bill would strengthen the Maryland Safe Haven Program within the existing budget appropriation.

For these reasons we strongly support this bill and ask for your favorable report. Please give women and infants a fighting chance in Maryland.

HOME

Maryland Fire/EMS Station Serves as Safe Haven for "Baby Craig"

Just after 7:00 a.m., Friday, August 12, 2005, a Prince George's County Fire Station became a Safe Haven for a 3-month-old infant.

Aug. 12, 2005



Fire Technician Hector Areizaga, Police Corporal Banks, Fire Captain Gigliotti and Police Ofcer Clarke with Baby Craig.

[View Image Gallery](#)

Just after 7:00 a.m., Friday, August 12, 2005, a Prince George's County Fire Station became a Safe Haven for a 3-month-old infant.

An adult female, self-proclaimed to be the child's aunt, brought 3-month old "Baby Craig" to the rear entrance of Chillum-Adelphi Fire/EMS Station 34 and explained to firefighters that she could no longer care for the baby. The aunt had been caring for the infant for about one day after he was dropped off by one of the parents. The aunt provided a diaper bag full of supplies and formula as well as a child safety seat.



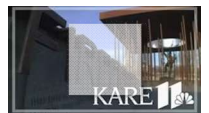
LATEST IN HOME

Operations & Training
Children Rescued by Texas City, TX, Firefighters



Feb. 23, 2024

Careers & Education
Burnsville, MN, Firefighter First in State to be Shotan...



Feb. 23, 2024

Apparatus
Wellington, KS, Fire/EMS Chief on Administrative Leave



[Firehouse.com News](#) Feb. 23, 2024

Mother who abandoned baby on road pleads guilty

Sandra McClary left 2-month-old daughter on road in Pasadena, authorities say



Updated: 3:34 PM EST Nov 30, 2015



ANNAPOLIS, Md. —

A woman who authorities said abandoned her baby on a road in Pasadena entered a guilty plea on Monday, Anne Arundel County prosecutors said.

Sandra McClary, 26, pleaded guilty to reckless endangerment of her child, prosecutors said.

County police said McClary's 2-month-old daughter was found in a carrier late July 4 in the 900 block of Druid Hill Avenue in Pasadena. There were scuff marks on the carrier and other debris in the area, police said.

"It is heartbreaking to see a child victimized by being abandoned on a roadside," Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Wes Adams said in a statement. "I'm hopeful that today's guilty plea by Ms. McClary is the first step in her taking responsibility, not only in her own actions, but also for the health and welfare of her children."

A judge sentenced McClary to five years in prison with all but five months suspended as time served. McClary will be on supervised probation for five years with the following conditions: drug and alcohol treatment, no unlawful contact with her children, cooperation with the Department of Social Services and successfully completing a parenting class.

SB873.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

MIKE MCKAY
Legislative District 1
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 416
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3565 · 301-858-3565
800-492-7122 Ext. 3565
Mike.McKay@senate.state.md.us

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senate Bill 873 – Courts – Immunity from Liability – Maryland Safe Haven Program

February 26, 2024

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

The purpose of the bill is extending the time from ten to 60 days after the birth of a newborn baby in which a person can leave the unharmed baby with a responsible adult without the intent of returning for the baby. This bill will also protect those individuals from any liability or criminal prosecution in that 60-day timeframe. The bill also authorizes a designated facility to receive these newborn babies in a specified newborn safety device. This bill will authorize the Secretary of Human Services to develop the Maryland Safe Haven Program. This is highly important for the safety of these abandoned children, so they have a chance at a good and healthy life ahead of them. It provides a safe and anonymous alternative for young women who are currently unable or choose not to raise a child for various reasons. I thank you all for your time and ask for a favorable vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike McKay".

Senator Mike McKay

Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland

Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

Safe Haven favor.pdf

Uploaded by: Olivia Shryock

Position: FAV

Greetings,

My name is Olivia Shryock, a 29-year-old Western Maryland native residing in Cumberland where I am a wife, mother of two, and FF/Medic for the last decade. As a volunteer and paid public servant of our state, I see firsthand the struggles and obstacles families face. My heart goes out to anyone who may feel abandoning their newborn is their only option.

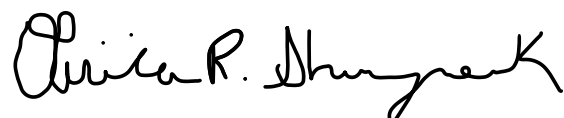
While Safe Haven laws are present in all fifty states, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, Maryland requires a "Face to Face" surrender to take place. Several states, 20 in fact, have already adjusted their safe haven law to include "anonymous" box surrenders (Oklahoma, Maine, Arizona, Kentucky, Arkansas, Virginia, Indiana, Ohio, Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Alabama, Mississippi, Kansas, West Virginia, Montana, and Wisconsin).

The NSHA has unofficially recorded that 1,610 babies have been illegally abandoned since 1999, 608 having been found alive, and 915 found deceased. In 2022 alone, 31 babies were placed in dumpsters, found in backpacks, or discarded in other dangerous locations. 22 of those infants were found deceased. These statistics underscore the need for a safe and anonymous option for desperate mothers. - www.hrsa.gov

Anonymous surrenders are not a new concept having been around for centuries in other countries and are quickly spreading across the United States to give women in crisis a safe and legal option. Once the safe haven law is adjusted to include box placement, there are non-profit organization's present ready to assist our cities with implementing these boxes, providing 24 hour crisis hotlines, a complete breakdown of costs, annual fees, education for our schools, and training for first responders. It's been alarming communicating with these organizations and researching how often these resources are being used but aren't available in every state.

I urged you to favor this positive change for our state! To give our women and infants another option. At no cost to the state or need for funding, this seems like a golden opportunity to provide this resource for our people.

Thank you for your time! Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Olivia R. Shryock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

sb0873-oppose-adoptee-rights-law-center.pdf

Uploaded by: Gregory Luce

Position: UNF



February 28, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Committee on Judicial Proceedings
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: NO VOTE ON SB0873 (BABY BOXES)

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

I am an attorney and a national legal expert on issues related to adopted people, the people who are ultimately created through the use of state safe haven laws and so-called "baby boxes." I ask that you and the committee issue a DO NOT PASS recommendation for SB0873, a bill that attempts to authorize the installation of baby boxes in Maryland.

First, I defer to the many maternal health organizations in the United States that do not want these boxes in their communities. If you have not heard from them or if you have questions about how these boxes undermine and divert resources from critical perinatal health, I urge you to listen to and seek out their knowledge and lived experiences in supporting what is most directly at issue in SB0873: maternal health and resources, particularly for BIPOC and marginalized communities.

The proliferation of "baby boxes" in the United States currently benefits a single corporation founded by anti-abortion activists: Indiana-based Safe Haven Baby Boxes Inc. To my knowledge, there are no other manufacturers or sellers of baby boxes in the United States. As a *de facto* monopoly, Safe Haven Baby Boxes has the benefit of a vertical market over the devices. Not only does it manufacture the boxes, but it also leases them, promotes them, works to change state laws to install them, controls their installation and use, places limitations on local communications, and further promotes its own "hotline" as a way to refer people to abandon babies in the boxes. That referral process is obviously a financial conflict of interest that, to my knowledge, is never disclosed to women or others in crisis.

I have attached a contract that SHBB uses for its "lease" and installation of baby boxes. It is from a town in Mississippi and it is publicly available upon request. The contract gives

significant corporate control over most operations of the boxes, and even requires the locality to notify the corporation if a baby is abandoned in a box. Such reporting is not about the infant's or the mother's best interest but is instead intended to allow the corporation to control communications about the abandonment and to hold elaborate public press conferences to celebrate the boxed abandonment of a baby. This, of course, does not comport with alleged promises of “anonymity” to birth mothers, particularly in the small communities where many of these boxes are installed. For comparison, I am not aware of any traditional safe haven location that holds such public press conferences to announce the abandonment of a child at that facility.

There is no evidence---none--- that baby boxes reduce illegal abandonment of infants. Rather, the installation of baby boxes along with the savvy promotion of them---including the celebration of every abandonment---does one primary thing: increases the abandonment of infants while diminishing any stated priorities for health and other supportive services for communities. Ultimately, baby boxes encourage people to have unsafe births outside of a safe environment or facility.

Maryland already has a robust safe haven law and leads the country in the number of infants abandoned through its safe haven program, second only to California. If you believe that illegal infant abandonments are a growing problem in the state---which they are not---Maryland should rely on its current safe haven law as a partial solution. It should also, more significantly, invest more heavily in maternal and reproductive health, particularly community-based mental health services, crisis nurseries, and direct financial assistance to low-income and marginalized people and communities.

For all of these reasons, I request a DO NOT PASS vote on SB0873. It is a bill that wastes significant resources while benefiting a single corporation, all at the expense of the health and welfare of individuals, pregnant women, and marginalized communities in Maryland.

Best regards,

ADOPTEE RIGHTS LAW CENTER PLLC



Gregory D. Luce

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

MUNICIPAL DOCKET
REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 21, 2023
THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
THE CITY OF LONG BEACH, MISSISSIPPI
5:00 O'CLOCK P.M. LONG BEACH CITY HALL, 201 JEFF DAVIS AVE.

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISH QUORUM
- IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS; PRESENTATIONS; PROCLAMATIONS
- V. AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL DOCKET
- VI. APPROVE MINUTES:
 - 1. MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
 - a. February 9, 2023, Recessed
 - b. February 9, 2023, Executive Session
 - c. February 16, 2023, Work Session
 - 2. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
 - a. February 9, 2023 Regular
- VII. APPROVE DOCKET OF CLAIMS NUMBER(S):
 - 1. 022123
- VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - 1. Beatline Parkway Environmental Study Phase One
 - 2. Future Paving Projects
 - 3. Magnolia Run Subdivision – Offsite Drainage Analysis
- IX. NEW BUSINESS
 - 1. Lease & Service Agreement – Save Haven Baby Boxes, Inc.
 - 2. Easement Agreement – First Baptist Church Long Beach
 - 3. Easement Agreement – Starita Properties 1, LLC
 - 4. Proposed Plans for Carwash Property at Klondyke & Commission; Buddy Ray, Brad Ray, Wayne O’Neal
 - 5. Contract Addendum – Synergetics; Library Technology Upgrade
 - 6. Follow Up of Tree on 4th St. & Jeff Davis – Deborah Caldwell
 - 7. Subdivision Ordinance
 - 8. Food Truck Ordinance
 - 9. Noise Ordinance
 - 10. Introduction – Louis Elias
- X. DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS
 - 1. MAYOR’S OFFICE
 - 2. PERSONNEL
 - a. Building Office – Step Increase (1)
 - b. Police Dept – Part-time New Hire (1)
 - 3. CITY CLERK
 - a. Revenue/Expense Report January 2023
 - 4. FIRE DEPARTMENT
 - 5. POLICE DEPARTMENT
 - a. Request to Advertise – Patrol Vehicle Bid
 - 6. ENGINEERING
 - a. Award – Trautman Basin Wastewater Imp; DNA Underground, LLC
 - b. Project Close Out – City Hall HVAC; KBM Solutions, LLC
 - 7. PUBLIC WORKS
 - 8. RECREATION
 - 9. BUILDING OFFICE
 - 10. HARBOR
 - 11. DERELICT PROPERTIES
 - a. Assess Cleaning Fees 18132 Allen Road; Buddist Association
 - b. Re-Clean 106 Lang Avenue; Celestial International Holdings LLC
 - c. Re-Clean 106 N Lang Avenue; Lloyd S. Bullard, Jr.
 - d. Re-Clean 0 Lang Avenue; William Stanley & Paula Ross
 - e. Re-Clean 0 Lang Avenue; Mark Burns
 - f. Clarification – 100 LaRosa Road; Sheila Ladner
 - g. Clarification – 307 W Old Pass Road; Roy & Gwen Tootle; Curtis Nissen
- XI. REPORT FROM CITY ATTORNEY
- XII. ADJOURN (OR) RECESS

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

Alderman Frazer made motion seconded by Alderman Brown to approve the following Lease and Service Agreement with Save Haven Baby Boxes, Inc.:

LEASE AND SERVICE AGREEMENT

THIS LEASE AND SERVICE AGREEMENT ("Agreement") is made and entered into effective this 21st day of February, 2023, by and between Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc., an Indiana nonprofit corporation ("SHBB") and Long Beach, Mississippi ("Provider").

RECITALS

WHEREAS, SHBB is a nonprofit educational organization that provides information and services related to child welfare, safe haven laws, initiation and implementation of newborn safety devices ("Safety Device"), and awareness related to preventing child abandonment;

WHEREAS, Provider desires to install a Safety Device on Provider's premises and SHBB wishes to lease a Safety Device to Provider at Provider's premises as defined herein;

WHEREAS, Mississippi Code ANN. §§ 43-15-201 -- 43-15-209, the Baby Drop off Law, provides certain protections by way of limited immunity for safe haven sites and their staff;

WHEREAS, Provider desires to lease a Safety Device from SHBB and have it installed on Provider's premises (the "Premises");

WHEREAS, SHBB is agreeable to placing a Safety Device on the Provider's premises and undertaking certain services in relation thereto;

WHEREAS, Provider has consulted its legal, financial, and insurance related advisors and has confirmed that its location and operation is acceptable under the laws and regulations of its jurisdiction for the placement of a Safety Device.

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the foregoing recitals which are incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement, the mutual terms and promises contained herein and for other good and valuable consideration, the parties agree as follows:

Section 1. Installation. SHBB shall provide to Provider one (1) Safety Device for installation by Provider on the Premises of Provider. Delivery of the Safety Device shall be the expense of the Provider. SHBB has the option at any time to oversee the installation of the Safety Device and advise as to installation on the appropriate placement to maximize awareness and implementation of its educational objectives as set forth in this Agreement and on the operation of and protocols for the Safety Device. SHBB and Provider agree to cooperate with respect to the appropriate third-party contractors for the placement of the Safety Device and to ensure that such third-party has the appropriate skill and knowledge for constructing improvements to Provider's facility. Provider is to pay for all installation costs and expenses for labor and/or materials. Provider is responsible for compliance with all applicable federal, state, and municipal or local laws, rules, and regulations, and all laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to permitting

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

requirements for the installation of the Safety Device. Provider further agrees to abide by the policies and procedures for installation, operation, and maintenance of the Safety Device as outlined in Exhibit "A" (the "Policies and Procedures") of this Agreement, which is hereby incorporated herein and made a substantive part of this Agreement by reference.

Section 2. Services by SHBB. SHBB shall provide annual services related to the performance of this Agreement. Such services shall include:

- A. Providing educational materials to Provider and policies and procedures relating to the maintenance of the Safety Device to Provider;
- B. Operating a toll-free phone number for the general public to utilize in emergency situations involving abandoned children or issues related thereto;
- C. Educating emergency services personnel related to use of the Safety Device;
- D. Providing educational information to the general public regarding the location and awareness of the Safety Device at the Provider's facility as well as other educational resources related to child welfare advocacy and safe haven law awareness;
- E. Provide at minimum an annual inspection and perform maintenance on the Safety Device; and;
- F. Exclusively repair or replace parts if/when the Safety Device is malfunctioning at expense of Provider as set forth under Section 4 of this Agreement and as otherwise provided in this Agreement (collectively Subsections A-F hereinafter referred to as the "Services").

Section 3. Lease and Service Term. The term of this Agreement shall be for five (5) years ("Term") and shall renew for successive five (5) year terms upon the mutual agreement of the parties to the terms, fees, and conditions, unless terminated in accordance with the terms of this Agreement or as otherwise agreed to by the Parties.

Section 4. Consideration. In consideration for leasing the Safety Device and providing the Services described under Sections 1 and 2 above, Provider agrees to pay SHBB an initial fee of Eleven Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$11,000.00), unless otherwise agreed to by the parties under Section 3 of this Agreement. Provider shall pay a renewal fee of Five Hundred and 00/100 Dollars (\$500.00) for each successive Term under this agreement, due within thirty (30) days of the start of each successive Term. Additionally, Provider shall pay an annual fee of Three Hundred and 00/100 Dollars (\$300.00) and other associated expenses as determined from time to time by SHBB on January 1 of every year that this Agreement is in force. The foregoing fees and expenses include, but are not limited to, the services and expenses listed in the Services, Fees, and Expenses Schedule attached hereto as Exhibit "B" which is hereby incorporated herein made a substantive part of this Agreement by reference.

Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen

Section 5. Obligations of Provider. In addition to any and all other obligations of the Provider set forth herein, Provider shall:

- A. Follow all policies and procedures governing the use of the Safety Device as provided by SHBB, which may change from time to time. SHBB shall provide at least thirty (30) days prior written notice to Provider for any changes or additions to its policies and/or procedures. Provider shall have thirty (30) days to review any changes to the policies and/or procedures relating to this Agreement and to notify SHBB if Provider accepts such updated/new policies/procedures. If Provider does not tender written Notice to SHBB that it does not agree to the new changes within thirty (30) days of receipt of same, then Provider agrees to said changes and any such changes shall become a substantive part of this Agreement. Provider and SHBB agree to negotiate any rejected changes or additions to the extent possible. Any revised changes or additions to the policies and/or procedures must comply with the then current laws of the State of Mississippi. For any rejected changes/additions to the policies and/or procedures arising herein or relating to this Agreement that cannot be negotiated/agreed to after a good faith attempt to do so, the pre-existing version shall remain in effect or this Agreement may be terminated. Such policies and procedures are included as Exhibit A to this Agreement and, by way of Provider's signature hereto, shall evidence Provider's acknowledgment and receipt of the Policies and Procedures.
- B. Provider agrees to comply with Mississippi and Federal law pertaining to the operation, maintenance, installation, and removal of the Safety Device.
- C. Provider agrees to maintain the Safety Device in good working order, the costs of which are to be borne by Provider.
- D. Provider agrees to not change, add to, subtract from, alter, rebrand, or otherwise modify the Safety Device and accompanying signage as set forth in Exhibit A in any manner whatsoever without the prior written approval of SHBB.
- E. Provider agrees to use best efforts to prevent any third parties from adding to, subtracting from, altering, rebranding, or otherwise modifying the Safety Device and accompanying materials/signage as set forth in Exhibit A in any manner whatsoever without prior written approval by SHBB.
- F. Provider agrees to immediately notify SHBB of any damage, alteration, and/or modification to the Safety Device.
- G. Provider shall refer to the Safety Device as a "Safe Haven Baby Box" or "Baby Box."

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

- H. Provider agrees to accept complete liability for any and all damages attributed to any and all unapproved alterations and/or modifications to the Safety Device made by Provider and any and all damages attributed to unapproved alterations and/or modifications to accompanying parts of the Safety Device, including required signage/materials made by Provider. Provider agrees to accept complete liability for modifications to the Safety Device which are the result of: its own actions, omissions, and/or failure to use best efforts to maintain the Safety Device in good working order or best efforts to prevent any modifications to the Safety Device by a third party.
- I. Provider shall procure and maintain twenty-four (24) hour alarm monitoring of the Safety Device at all times in accordance with directions for the same from SHBB and shall confirm with SHBB that such service is acceptable.
- J. Should the alarm monitoring service be disconnected for any reason, or should the Safety Device malfunction in any other way, Provider shall immediately notify SHBB of said malfunction and shall secure the Safety Device and ensure it is not available for public use by locking its exterior door and removing all signage and material related to its use and functionality. Further, should the Safety Device malfunction, Provider agrees that it will post signage that the Safety Device is presently unavailable and Provider agrees that it will keep the Safety Device secured and closed to the public until SHBB approves the Safety Device to be reopened to the public for public use as a Safety Device.
- K. Provider agrees that SHBB may, but is not required to, inspect the Safety Device at any time including, but not limited to: to ensure that it is in good working order, to ensure proper branding and signage is being displayed, and to conduct tests related to its functionality and monitoring and alarm systems.
- L. Provider acknowledges and agrees to maintain current knowledge of any changes to said Mississippi State Law or Federal law governing the Safety Device and acknowledges and agrees to operate and maintain the Safety Device in accordance with the most recent version of said State and Federal laws.
- M. Provider shall bear the cost of operating, maintaining, removing, repairing and/or otherwise modifying (modifications subject to approval of SHBB) the Safety Device.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT ANY MALFUNCTION IDENTIFIED WITH RESPECT TO THE SAFETY DEVICE OR ANY DISCONNECTION IN THE SAFETY DEVICE MONITORING SYSTEM RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE SECURING AND LOCKING OF THE SAFETY DEVICE SO THAT IT MAY NOT BE USED BY THE PUBLIC DURING THIS TIME PERIOD. FAILURE TO DO SO MAY RESULT IN A THREAT OF BODILY HARM OR DEATH TO AN INFANT

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

PLACED IN THE SAFETY DEVICE DURING ANY PERIOD OF TIME IN WHICH THE SAFETY DEVICE IS MALFUNCTIONING OR NOT.

Section 6. Representations and Warranties.

- A. Representations & Warranties of Provider. Provider represents and warrants that the undersigned is a duly acting and authorized agent of Provider who is empowered to execute this Agreement with full authority of Provider. Further, Provider has undertaken a reasonable investigation into the laws and regulations governing the applicable jurisdiction within which it intends to place the Safety Device and has confirmed that such placement and administration of the Safety Device does not violate any provision of any law, ordinance, governmental regulation, court order, or other similar governmental controls.
- B. Representation & Warranties of SHBB. SHBB represents and warrants that the undersigned is a duly acting and authorized agent of SHBB who is empowered to execute this Agreement with full authority of SHBB. Further, SHBB has full ownership of the Safety Device. SHBB represents and warrants that the Safety Device is fit for use and will operate as a Safety Device in accordance with Safe Haven for Infants Act, NMSA 1978 Section 24-22-1.1.
- C. SHBB REPRESENTS THAT THE SAFETY DEVICE IS NOT A MEDICAL DEVICE AND HAS CONFIRMED SUCH WITH THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION. SHBB REPRESENTS THAT THE SAFETY DEVICE IS NOT INTENDED AS A CONSUMER PRODUCT AND THUS IS NOT REGISTERED WITH THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION. SHBB FURTHER REPRESENTS THAT THE SAFETY DEVICE IS NOT REGISTERED WITH THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION AND/OR THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION. SHBB REPRESENTS THAT THE SAFETY DEVICE IS NOT TESTED BY NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED TESTING LABORATORIES PROGRAM.**

Section 7. Insurance. Provider agrees to procure and maintain in full force and effect at all times during the Term of this Agreement and any renewals thereof, at its own cost and expense, a policy or policies of comprehensive commercial general liability insurance on an occurrence basis, in the amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence/\$2,000,000 aggregate and a \$2,000,000 limit umbrella coverage related to the Safety Device's placement and operation in or about Provider's facility against all loss, damage or liability for personal injury or death of any person or loss or damage to property occurring in upon or about the Safety Device during the Term of this Agreement and all extensions thereof. This insurance policy need not be a separate policy solely because of this Agreement but, rather, will be part of the Provider's general liability and umbrella policies.

Section 8. Indemnification. Each party agrees to defend and indemnify, protect and hold

Minutes of February 21, 2023 Mayor and Board of Aldermen

harmless the other party, its officers, directors, employees, volunteers, independent contractors, agents, and all other persons and related entities thereof, against any loss, claim at law or equity, cause of action, expenses, damages or any other liability (collectively, "Claim") arising in relation to and to the extent of the indemnifying party's gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct, whether acts or omissions, in the installation, placement, removal, use, and maintenance of the Safety Device in, on, or about Provider's facility or premises. No provision in this Agreement modifies or waives any provision of the Mississippi Tort Claims Act.

Section 9. Termination. Provider may terminate this Agreement upon sixty (60) days prior written notice from Provider to SHBB prior to the end of the Term, otherwise this Agreement shall renew for a successive Term. In accordance with the terms of this Agreement, Provider and/or SHBB may terminate this Agreement on notice of a change of policies and procedures by SHBB that Provider did not previously agree to after a good faith attempt has been made to negotiate the change or addition to the policies and/or procedures arising herein or relating to this Agreement; however, a required change of policy or procedure pursuant to compliance with a Mississippi State or Federal law shall not be grounds to terminate this Agreement. SHBB may terminate this Agreement for any reason specified under Section 10, below. At the point of termination of this Agreement, Provider shall secure and lock the Safety Device and remove all signage provided by SHBB. Provider shall place new visible signage denoting that the Safety Device is not functional and that any person desiring to utilize the Safety Device should instead contact emergency services. If Provider removes the Safety Device, then it shall make arrangements with SHBB for its conveyance or retrieval to SHBB. SHBB shall not be obligated to remove the Safety Device; however, at any time after this Agreement has terminated, SHBB may, at its sole discretion, notify Provider that it intends to remove and recover the Safety Device. Under such circumstances, Provider agrees to cooperate with SHBB in the retrieval of the Safety Device, the expenses of which shall be borne by SHBB, so long as expenses do not exceed \$500.00 and unless the termination of this Agreement was effectuated under Section 10 below, in which case the cost hereunder shall be borne by Provider.

Section 10. Remedies.

- A. Option to Cure.** Any uncured breach of this Agreement by Provider, after written notice from SHBB to Provider and a thirty (30) day opportunity to cure, shall give SHBB the option of immediately terminating this Agreement and retrieving the Safety Device from Provider's facility at Provider's own cost and expense. If Provider is notified by SHBB that the Safety Device is not properly functional or lacks monitoring required by this Agreement, then SHBB may order the Safety Device secured and locked until further inspection. Provider shall have thirty (30) days to cure any lack of monitoring or improper functioning of the Safety Device. Such time may be extended by any delay attributable to SHBB. If Provider does not cure any lack of monitoring or improper functioning of the Safety Device within the initial thirty (30) day period upon SHBB's review and report, Provider may have an additional thirty (30) days to cure any breach. If Provider fails to cure any breach of this Agreement after two (2) attempts to cure as set forth above, SHBB may terminate this Agreement if it concludes in its sole discretion that Provider has not upheld its obligations under this Agreement. Any breach of this Agreement by Provider

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

which has not been cured by Provider within thirty (30) days after notice received from SHBB shall give SHBB the option of terminating this Agreement and retrieving the Safety Device from Provider's facility at Provider's own cost and expense.

- B. Attorney's Fees.** Attorneys' fees, costs, and expenses shall be awarded to the prevailing party for any dispute relating to or arising from this Agreement. The term "*Prevailing Party*" shall include, without limitation, a party who substantially obtains or defeats the relief sought, as the case may be, whether by compromise, settlement, judgment, or the abandonment by the other party of its claim or defense.

Section 11. Ownership of Safety Device. Provider agrees and acknowledges that ownership of the Safety Device remains with SHBB and this Agreement is merely a services and lease agreement. Provider does not have any ownership interest in the Safety Device. Provider shall not lease, sell, or otherwise transfer the Safety Device during or after the term of this Agreement without the specific written consent of SHBB.

Section 12. Disclaimer and Limitation of Warranties. SHBB IS NOT THE MANUFACTURER OF THE SAFETY DEVICE AND MAKES NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WHATSOEVER, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, AS TO THE SUITABILITY, DURABILITY, FITNESS FOR USE, MERCHANTABILITY, CONDITION, QUALITY, PERFORMANCE, OR NON-INFRINGEMENT OF THE SAFETY DEVICE. WITH RESPECT TO THE SAFETY DEVICE, PROVIDER ACCEPTS IT "AS IS." THE SAFETY DEVICE SHALL BE SUBJECT TO ANY WARRANTIES PROVIDED TO SHBB AND/OR PROVIDER BY THE SAFETY DEVICE MANUFACTURER AND/OR AVAILABLE BY THE SAFETY DEVICE'S COMPOSITE PARTS. THERE ARE NO WARRANTIES WHICH EXTEND BEYOND THE TERM(S) OF THIS AGREEMENT, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED OR PROVIDED FOR HEREIN OR PROVIDED BY LAW.

SHBB neither assumes nor authorizes any other business organization, entity, or person associated or related by legal right, corporate entity, governmental entity, or any other entity associated or related by legal right to assume it, or any other liability in connection with the construction, use, operation, installment, removal, maintenance, or lease of the Safety Device. There are no warranties which extend beyond the terms of this Agreement, unless otherwise stated or provided for herein or by law via preemption. These warranties shall not apply to the Safety Device or any and all improvements, restoration, repair, remodel, modifications, and/or any other construction work on the Safety Device of any kind, related to the Safety Device, or any other part thereof which has been subject to accident, negligence, alteration, abuse, use or misuse of same which are not approved of by SHBB and/or agreed to by SHBB. SHBB makes no warranty whatsoever with respect to accessories or parts not supplied by it.

Section 13. Notice. Any notices requests, demands, waivers and other communications given as provided in this Agreement will be in writing and will be deemed to have been given if delivered in person (including by Federal Express or other personal delivery service), or mailed by certified or registered mail, postage prepaid, and addressed to at the following addresses:

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

Notice to SHBB: Monica Kelsey
P.O. Box 185
Woodburn, IN 46797

Notice to Provider: George Bass
P.O. Box 929
Long Beach, MS
39150

Any such notice sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt, shall be deemed to have been duly given and received seventy-two (72) hours after the same is so addressed and mailed with postage prepaid. Notice sent by recognized overnight delivery service shall be effective only upon actual receipt thereof at the office of the addressee set forth above, and any such notice delivered at a time outside of normal business hours shall be deemed effective at the opening of business on the next business day. Any party may change its address for purposes of this paragraph by giving notice to the other party as herein provided. Delivery of any copies as provided herein shall not constitute delivery of notice hereunder.

Section 14. Assignability. This Agreement is binding and benefits the successors and assignees of the Provider, which includes any and all originations/entities or persons with which the Provider may dilute, merge or consolidate, or to which it may transfer substantially all of its assets or equity interests. Provider shall not transfer or assign this Agreement, however, without the specific written consent of SHBB, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

Section 15. Governing Law/Jurisdiction. The validity, interpretation, construction, and performance of this Agreement shall be governed by the laws of Mississippi and Mississippi courts. Should any dispute arise out of or relating to this Agreement and any of its incorporated parts, Parties agree that said dispute may exclusively be litigated in state or federal court in of the State of Mississippi. Each Party waives, to the fullest extent permitted by law, the defense of an inconvenient forum to the maintenance of such action or proceeding in any such court. Each Party agrees and acknowledges that any term not defined herein shall be construed to have its every-day, contextual meaning as defined in the latest editions of the Merriam Webster Dictionary, and if a legal term, Black's Law Dictionary; and should any term, condition, or provision of this Agreement be deemed vague, ambiguous, or confusing, it shall not be construed in favor of either Party.

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

Section 16. Integration/Entire Agreement. This Agreement, along with the attached Exhibits hereto represents the entire expression of the final agreement of the parties and supersedes all previous and contemporaneous communications or agreement regarding the subject matter hereof. Provider by its signature below hereby acknowledges that Provider agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions and policies and procedures set forth in this Agreement as may be updated from time to time and agreed to in accordance with the terms of this Agreement. Any additional terms or conditions contained in purchase orders or other forms not incorporated into this Agreement are expressly rejected by Provider and shall not be binding, unless Provider agrees to them in a writing signed by both parties.

Section 17. No Oral Modification. No change, modification, extension, termination, or waiver of this Agreement or any of its incorporated documents or parts, or any of the provisions contained, will be valid unless made in writing and signed by duly authorized representative of the parties.

Section 18. Waiver. No waiver of any of the provisions of this Agreement shall be valid and enforceable unless such waiver is in writing and signed by the parties to be charged and, unless otherwise stated, no such waiver shall constitute a waiver of any other provision or a continuing waiver.

Section 19. Severability. In the event that one or more of the provisions of this Agreement shall become invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect, the validity, legality and enforceability of the remaining provisions contained shall not be affected as a whole.

Section 20. Time of the Essence. The Parties expressly recognize that time is of the essence in the performance of their respective obligations under this Agreement and that each Party is relying on the timely performance by the other Party and will schedule operations and incur obligations to third parties in reliance upon timely performance by the other party.

Section 21. Tort Claims Immunity. Provider shall be subject in all cases to the immunities, provisions and limitations of the Mississippi Tort Claims Act §11-46-11.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Parties have caused this Agreement to be executed and be effective on the date first written above.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc.

By: _____
Monica Kelsey, Founder/CEO
Safe Haven Baby Box, Inc.

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

Provider

City of Long Beach Mississippi

By: _____

Lease and Service Agreement

10

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

EXHIBIT A

SAFE HAVEN BABY BOXES, INC.
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. Purpose:

- A. Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc.'s product is the Baby Box. A Baby Box is a safety device provided for under Indiana Safe Haven Law and legally permits a parent in crisis to safely, securely, and anonymously surrender his or her newborn. A Baby Box is installed in an exterior wall of a designated fire station or hospital. It has an exterior door that automatically locks upon placement of a newborn inside the Baby Box and an interior door which allows a medical staff member to secure the surrendered newborn from inside the designated building.

II. Policies:

- A. A Provider is a hospital or site, such as a volunteer fire department, staffed by an emergency services provider on a twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) day a week basis and provides a legal location and maintenance for a Safe Haven Baby Box where a newborn may be dropped off by a person who wishes to relinquish custody under the Safe Haven Law of the applicable jurisdiction.
- B. The Baby Box is designed with three independent alarms and is activated:
1. When the door is accessed from the outside.
 2. When the newborn is placed in the box and activates the motion sensor.
 3. When electrical failure occurs to the Baby Box.

III. Generic procedures when the Baby Box is Activated:

- A. Emergency Personnel, including, Firefighters, Police Officers, EMT's, or Paramedics must perform the act of retrieving a newborn and taking said newborn into custody when he or she is voluntarily placed in a Box and the parent does not express an intent to return for the newborn.
- B. Emergency Personnel who take custody of a newborn shall perform any act necessary to protect the child's health and safety.
- C. Emergency Personnel must respond every time an alarm is activated at the Baby Box to verify whether a newborn has been dropped off.
- D. Emergency personnel may access the Baby Box on the inside of the Provider's building. An alarm is activated to signal 911 when the door is opened and the newborn may be inside the door area on the prepared bed area.
- E. Newborns will be evaluated by medical personnel at the location and immediately transported to the closest hospital for further evaluation. The

**Minutes of February 21, 2023
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

evaluation at the hospital will include screenings and examinations by physicians as necessary.

- F. EMS transporting newborn to hospital will notify the hospital personnel that this was a Safe Haven Baby Box newborn surrendered under the current Safe Haven Law.
- G. The hospital supervisor will notify the appropriate state agency and have a social services consult order placed.

IV. Additional Procedures for designated Providers:

- A. All Baby Boxes must be leased from Safe Haven Baby Box, Inc. and may not be re-sold. All Baby Boxes shall remain the property of Safe Haven Baby Box, Inc. throughout each and every Term of any Agreement between Provider and Safe Haven Baby Box, Inc.
- B. To support the education of, and to avoid confusion in the market, the Baby Box may not be rebranded or called anything but a "Safe Haven Baby Box", a "Baby Box", or referred to as a "Box".
- C. Each Provider will maintain uniform signage purchased from Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. at its own expense. Any additional signage must have prior approval from Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc.
- D. The Baby Box will be delivered in accordance the following:
 - i Initial fee has been paid to Safe Haven Baby Boxes.
 - ii The Provider location is able to agree to install, test, train personnel, and schedule the unveiling / blessing within sixty (60) days of receipt of the Baby Box.
 - iii Provider understands delivery of the Baby Box will be scheduled 4 to 6 weeks after payment is received and with mutual agreement of the installation and unveiling / blessing dates.
 - iv Provider agrees to arrange for and begin the installation of the baby box within Two (2) weeks after delivery.
- E. The Baby Box will not be announced to the public or otherwise discussed with third parties or go "live" prior to the official unveiling/blessing of the Baby Box, which will be agreed upon prior to "going live".
- F. The "Go-Live" date will be determined after the following:
 - i Installation is completed and the alarm system is ready for testing.
 - ii Seven consecutive days of successful alarm testing is completed.
 - iii Training of staff is completed.
 - iv Final Inspection is completed.
- G. Each Provider must maintain security monitoring at its own expense and may not turn off security monitoring without giving Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. sixty (60) days' notice.
 - i If a Provider has the service discontinued without Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc.'s knowledge, the location is subject to liability.

Minutes of February 21, 2023 Mayor and Board of Aldermen

- ii Pending notice or drop of security monitoring, Safe Haven Baby Box, Inc. will de-activate the non-conforming location.
 - H. Each Provider will provide medical information and a copy of parents' rights located in a bag inside the Baby Box. The bag is to be placed on the medical bassinet and leaning against the outside door.
 - I. Each Provider must test the security/alarm system on the Baby Box at least once a week. Provider must keep a log or record of tests and submit the log or record to Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. quarterly and upon the demand of Safe Haven Baby Box, Inc. The log or record shall list at least the name of the persons testing the Baby Box, the date tested, and the result of the test.
 - J. Provider will ensure that no video monitoring will occur around the part of the building containing or facing the Baby Box.
 - K. Provider must perform daily checks of the Baby Box to ensure the presence of a clean fitted bassinet sheet and a blanket.
 - L. Provider must ensure a climate-controlled environment inside the Baby Box maintains a reasonable temperature for a newborn.
 - M. Each Provider is responsible for training personnel on the use, features, and procedures of the Baby Box. Provider can contact Safe Haven Baby Box, Inc. for group training services.
 - N. After retrieving a newborn from the Baby Box, the Provider must verify that the door to the Baby Box is secured and closed.
 - O. After retrieving a newborn from the Baby Box, the Provider must reset the alarm system after deactivation.
 - P. All safe surrenders are required to be reported to Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. by phone at 260-750-3668 and to the Mississippi Department of Human Services at 601-359-4368 within two (2) hours of the surrender.
 - Q. In the event that the Agreement with Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. is terminated for whatever reason, Provider is responsible for all costs and expenses of removing respective Baby Boxes at Provider location(s).
 - R. Provider is to use best efforts to secure the integrity and good working function of the Baby Box at all times, including upon removal of any Baby Box, if necessary. Damage to Provider's leased Baby Box(es) is compensable to Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. by Provider. Provider is to reimburse Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. for any and all damage to the Baby Box during the pendency of the Agreement and any termination or expiration of it. Any such reimbursements are to be sent within thirty (30) days to the name and address listed in the Notice provision of the Agreement.
- V. Documentation (Documents & Forms):
- A. Documents
 1. Weekly Safe Haven Baby Box alarm system checks
 2. All Safe Surrenders by date and time

Minutes of February 21, 2023 Mayor and Board of Aldermen

EXHIBIT B SAFE HAVEN BABY BOXES, INC. SERVICES, FEES, AND EXPENSES SCHEDULE

Initial Fee: \$11,000 (\$12,000 with pre-installed camera option)

1. Baby Box including signage and provider kit
2. "Pre-installation" Services:
 - a. Examination of location
 - b. Administrative/Legal resources
 - c. Consultation on programs
 - d. Assistance with raising funds to support the cost of the box (optional)
3. Installation Services:
 - a. Inspection of installation
 - b. Training to all emergency personnel
4. Post Installation Services:
 - a. Marketing of the box
 - b. 24/7 hotline available to the community
 - c. Advertising of the box
 - d. Efforts to support raising awareness on a local, state, and national level supporting the box in each community

Annual Fee: \$300

1. Annual Fee Services
 - a. Recertification of the box by SHBB authorized personnel
 - b. Maintenance of box from expected use
 - c. Unlimited repairs and parts replacement as a result of a malfunction and not as a result of negligence or vandalism.

OTHER FEES NOT INCLUDED IN INITIAL FEE: (Estimated at \$5,000-\$7,500)

**Fees vary based on location and/or services donated by local community members. The below items are estimates and not a guarantee of cost.*

1. Delivery: Minimum \$500.00. Cost based on location and transportation from Indiana. You can pick up at our Woodburn IN manufacturing facility to waive the delivery charge. (Must be pre-scheduled)
2. Installation: Labor and materials~\$2,000-\$3,500 (Location may be able to get this donated)
3. Electrical and Alarm: hook up to internal alarm system (Internal alarm must go to 911 dispatch for use with the baby box)~\$1,200
4. Annual Alarm Service: Annual fee for monitoring~\$300 annually paid by location to Alarm Company
5. Permits or other requirements prior to construction. (varies)
6. Camera option. Box comes pre-installed with the Amazon Blink™ camera and requires a third-party membership to activate. Location must have a Wi-Fi connection. **Alternatives may apply. Please contact SHBB for more information*

After continued discussion, and upon the advice of City Attorney Steve Simpson, Alderman McGoey offered a substitute motion seconded by Alderman Parker and unanimously carried to approve the aforementioned agreement subject to Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. agreeing to strike Section 8. Indemnification and counsel's review and approval.

Maryland Senate SHBB SB873 SB 912 testimony final

Uploaded by: Marley Greiner

Position: UNF



Bastard Nation: the Adoptee Rights Organization

PO Box 4607

New Windsor, New York 12553-7845

614-795-6819

bastards.org bastardnation3@gmail.com

TO: Members: Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Marley Greiner, Executive Chair
RE: SB873/SB912--Safe Haven Baby Box/Newborn Safety Device-- **Submitted**
Testimony: OPPOSE
DATE: February 28,2024

Bastard Nation: the Adoptee Rights Organization is the largest adoptee civil rights organization in the United States. We support only full unrestricted access for all adopted persons to their original birth certificates (OBC) and related documents.

In addition to being the Executive Chair and co-founder of Bastard Nation I operate the Stop Safe Haven Baby Boxes Now website (<https://stopshbbnow.org>) that contains over 100 pages of Safe Haven Baby Box information including up-to-date legislative tracking, individual state updates, statistics, policy statements from organizations that oppose boxes, critical readings and reports, pictorials, videos, and a frequently published blog.

Bastard Nation is absolutely opposed to implementation of Safe Haven Baby Boxes/Newborn Safety Devices in SB873/SB912((and HB1323) bills that encourage a tiny tiny tiny number of Maryland parents to legally and anonymously abandon their newborns for adoption; thus, denying their children the right to their a genuine record of birth, biological family information, history, and social and cultural context.

We are attaching our bullet points of objections and concerns at the bottom of the testimony.

In addition to those points we would like to express four other points:

(1) HB1323 is a vendor bill, for a family-operated non-profit corporation that exploits vulnerable children and their parents and encourages a permanent uninformed solution to a temporary family crisis.

To the best of our knowledge, there is no other manufacturer or seller of baby boxes in the United States than Safe Haven Baby Boxes Inc located in Woodburn, Indiana. As a *de facto* monopoly, the baby box corporation also maintains the benefit of a vertical market over the devices. Not only does it manufacture the boxes, but it also leases them, promotes them, (including elaborate box blessings and press conferences that celebrate abandonment and often feature children who have been left in drop boxes), works to change state laws to install them, controls their installation and use, places limitations on local communications, and further promotes its own free “hotline” as a way to refer people to abandon babies in the boxes. That referral process is obviously a financial conflict of interest that, to my knowledge, is never disclosed to women or others in crisis.

The corporation is also, as of 2022, a \$1.1 million profitable operation that pays corporation founder and CEO Monica Kelsey and her husband (listed on the payroll) at least \$170,000 each year (though these figures are likely even more today). The company also employs Mrs. Kelsey's son. The Kelseys and the corporation obviously have vested financial interests in expanding the baby box empire to every state, and they have specifically stated this as a goal. It has no “competition” for that mission other than traditional safe haven laws and safe haven organizations, which generally do not support installation of boxes and require safe and reasonable face-to-face relinquishments in hospitals or fire stations.

(2) Statistics

There is no epidemic of newborn discard in Maryland. Safe Haven Baby Boxes Inc. reports that since 2017 only six cases of discard have been reported in the state. There are at least 263 traditional safe haven drop-off locations in Maryland.

(3) There is no evidence that Safe Haven/newborn safety devices have saved one single baby.

We believe that the installation of baby boxes, along with the savvy promotion of them —such as public celebration of legal abandonment—does one thing: increases the abandonment of infants. *Of note:* a substantial number of babies left in boxes, according to press reports and SHBB Inc press conferences arrive wrapped in blankets, dressed in diapers, onesies, caps, with toys, and notes from their mothers. SHBB Inc reports that they have regular conversations with some of the moms and one even volunteers for the organization. **No studies have ever been made on boxes, their use, outcomes, and efficacy.** The public and lawmakers are expected to believe the word of the entrepreneurial SHBB Inc vendor.

- (4) **The promotion of boxes diminishes if not overtakes legitimate priorities to provide adequate health care, mental health services, and other community-based supportive services for people in crisis.**

A 2019 study made by the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine and Children's Hospital in Los Angeles indicates that the majority of infants surrendered through the state's traditional SH program came from low-income communities. Instead of offering a quick and dirty unethical throwaway "solution" to discard (and extension neglect and abuse) the State of Maryland should extend programs to assist pregnant persons, especially those marginalized groups, with pre-and post-natal care, mental health care, and pro-family and family preservation programs offered by public and private agencies.

Selected list of organizations that oppose Safe Haven Baby Boxes:

Bastard Nation, Adoptee Rights Law Center, Adoptees United, Missouri Open, Texas Adoptee Rights Coalition, Abrazo Adoption Associates (San Antonio), New York Adoptee Rights Coalition, Equal Access Oklahoma, Oklahoma Original Birth Certificates for All Adult Adoptees, Florida Adoption Council (Florida affiliate of the American Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproduction Attorneys), Against Child Trafficking, Chicago Bar Association, Louisiana March of Dimes, Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families, A Safe Haven for Newborns (Florida), Save Abandoned Babies, Foundation (Illinois), Indiana Department of Health, Mad Voters—Indiana, Freedom from Religion Foundation.

Please vote Do Not Pass on SB873/SB912 . Thank you.

Stop Safe Haven Baby Boxes Now!

Why We Oppose Safe Haven Baby Boxes

Adoptee rights and adoption reform organizations throughout the United States oppose deceptive relinquishment practices that are rooted in shame and secrecy, lead to drastic permanent solutions to temporary problems, and create a population of adopted people who have no birth records, identity, or history.

We seek ethics, transparency, and accountability in adoption and in related child welfare practices, not band-aid and gimmick solutions to social, political, and mental health problems that cause newborn discards. Contrary to long-standing and established child welfare policies, the use of baby boxes (sometimes called “newborn safety devices”):

- Creates a secretive and shadow child welfare system that eliminates informed consent, a child’s identifying information, and any record of the social and medical histories of newborns. Baby boxes operate to eliminate a child’s right to identity by eliminating accurate birth registrations and records.
- Commodifies infants and normalizes “legal” baby abandonment as a consumer choice, without acknowledging the lifetime psychological consequences for the baby and the mother, including, but not limited to, abandonment issues, shame, guilt, substance abuse, depression, low self-esteem, and suicidal ideation. Boxes represent state-promoted throwaway culture; some critics call them instruments of child abuse.
- Replaces professional best practice standards with unprofessional and unethical “relinquishment” procedures. Baby boxes instead give vulnerable parents a right to abandon an infant out of convenience or ignorance, with no counseling, documentation, or discussion of established alternatives, such as adequate medical care, financial and material family preservation assistance, or crisis nurseries.
- Deprives the non-surrendering parent of the right to rear her or his own child. Baby boxes eliminate any protections to prove that a person using the box has a legal right to surrender the baby. Embarrassed, frightened, or abusive partners, spouses or family members, and even sex traffickers, will use (and undoubtedly have used) baby boxes without the consent or knowledge of the (other) parent, with no repercussions. Baby box proponents dismiss the real, dangerous, and violent situations experienced by women, simply advocating that “if your baby is taken, just call the police.”
- Disenfranchises natural parents—particularly the non-surrendering parent (usually the father)—of their right to due process by eliminating their ability to locate the child, thus denying them knowledge of (among other things) the dependency proceeding to which they are a party. State-based Putative Father Registries, touted as a safeguard, are rendered useless since records are filed by the name of the mother who remains anonymous by law.
- Creates at-risk adoptions due to possible litigation from the non-surrendering parent or biological family members who may learn of the abandonment and seek custody.

- Contravenes family reunification guidelines of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (AFSA) and dispenses with tribal rights embedded in the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which can also lead to federal litigation.
- Encourages women to keep problematic pregnancies a secret. The promotion of baby boxes discourages family and professional communication and eliminates assistance for sexual and physical abuse, mental illness, substance abuse, and social isolation—factors that cause nearly every newborn discard. Studies indicate that once a pregnancy is acknowledged and discussed the chance of discard almost always disappears.
- Hides crimes such as rape, incest, spousal and partner abuse, and human trafficking.
- Promotes and supports the non-profit ministry Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc., a million-dollar corporation that controls the manufacture, promotion, sales, installation, and referral of women to baby boxes in the United States. It has created the baby box market and lobbies legislatures, produces boxes at its own factory, installs the devices, operates a hotline that refers pregnant women to box locations near them, and holds press conferences when a newborn is left in a box. Rather than protect legitimate privacy interests of the infant, it uses boxed children as fundraising tools for its ministry.
- Discourages women from seeking pre-and post-natal care, instead encouraging dangerous and unsafe unattended births in the community, outside of a hospital.

Baby boxes do not address the causes of infant discard. Anonymously dropping a baby into a box and walking away does not obviate or solve the root causes of newborn discard/neonaticide, which are:

- poverty
- inability to secure affordable medical treatment and reproductive health care
- denial or ignorance of pregnancy
- draconian immigration policies and practices
- substance abuse and physical and sexual abuse
- shame, crime, mental illness, dysfunctional families, social isolation, and poor communication skills.

For More Information

Stop Safe Haven Baby Boxes Now
 Marley Greiner
 (614) 795-6819
stopshbbnow.org

SB0873_LOI_MDACOG, MDAAP_Courts - Immunity From Li

Uploaded by: Pam Kasemeyer

Position: INFO



TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable Mike McKay

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Christine K. Krone

DATE: February 29, 2024

RE: **LETTER OF INFORMATION** – Senate Bill 873 – *Courts – Immunity From Liability – Maryland Safe Haven Program*

On behalf of the Maryland Section of The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, we submit this **letter of information** for Senate Bill 873.

Senate Bill 873 proposes to modify the current liability immunity when a mother or person who has the mother’s permission leaves an unharmed newborn with a responsible adult within 10 days after birth and the responsible adult takes the newborn to an authorized facility as defined by the Department of Human Resources. The bill alters the timeframe to 60 days from birth and also authorizes the designated facility to accept the newborn in a “newborn safety device”, which reads as if it is some type of box that has certain capabilities to monitor the newborn. The bill includes requirements for funding of public education on the framework and legal requirements for surrendering a newborn.

While the safe and legal surrendering of a newborn by a mother who does not want to retain custody is important, there is no research or clinical evidence of the safety or appropriateness related to the device that is described in the legislation. Before advancing the legal framework provided in this bill, there should be clear and uncontroverted clinical evidence supporting the use of these devices.

For more information call:

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Christine K. Krone
410-244-7000