

5.3B-1

REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council
From the City Manager

January 24, 2005

Subject

Resolution authorizing the City Manager to allow the City to participate in the County of San Mateo Safe Haven program by designating City Fire Stations as Safe Haven Sites for newborn infants.

Recommendation

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to allow the City to participate in the County of San Mateo Safe Haven program by designating City Fire Stations as "Safe Haven" sites for the surrender of newborn infants pursuant to State of California Health and Safety Code section 1255.7 (*Attachment 1*) and to execute any agreements implementing same.

Background

The Safely Surrendered Baby Law (also known as the Safe Haven Law or Newborn Abandonment Law) was signed into law by Governor Gray Davis in September, 2000, and went into effect on January 1, 2001. "Safe Havens" are a part of a statewide effort to end the tragic consequences of infant abandonment. Since the law was enacted, 61 infants have been safely surrendered in California.¹

The law, as defined, allows a parent or legal guardian to safely surrender an infant three days old or younger to any designated Safe Surrender site such as a hospital emergency room or fire station. Requests for confidentiality will be respected and the person may surrender the infant without fear of arrest or prosecution for reckless child abandonment, provided that the infant has not been abused or neglected.

An amendment to the 2001 law (2003 SB139, Brulte) was passed on August 1, 2003, to strengthen the existing legislation by expanding the criteria for safe surrender personnel authorized to accept physical custody of an infant to "any personnel on duty at a safe surrender site" as opposed to "designated staff". Other provisions in the amendment include requirements for: Safe surrender sites to post uniform signage; Notification of child protective services as soon as possible after an infant has been surrendered; Protection of the confidentiality of the parent who surrenders a child; Information regarding the surrendered infant provided to the California Missing Children Clearinghouse and National Crime Information Center; Clarification that possession of the identification bracelet does not establish parentage or a right to custody of the child.

¹ This number was current as of November, 2004. The statistic was taken from the program proposal letter issued by the County of San Mateo Health Services Department on November 8, 2004.

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The San Mateo County Health Services Department ("County Health Services") desires to improve access to places where infants may be safely surrendered and will propose to the County Board of Supervisors that all fire stations within the County become "Safe Havens" under the Newborn Abandonment Law due to ease of accessibility and a low level of intimidation. County Health Services has requested that each City/District in the County determine if its fire stations may be utilized as "Safe Haven" sites for the surrender of newborns. The Fire Chief and City Manager have determined that it is feasible and desirable to participate in the "Safe Haven" program should the County Board of Supervisors request that all fire stations located in the County serve as "Safe Haven" sites.

If this resolution is adopted, the Redwood City Fire Department will utilize County Health Services Agency guidelines to instruct each of our five fire stations on the procedural requirements for admitting a child into their care. The Department will provide training for fire personnel on the details of this policy.

The plan for the Redwood City Fire Department's compliance proceeds as follows: Multi-lingual signage signifying the fire station's status as a "Safe Haven" site will be installed and clearly visible to passersby on the premises of each of the City's five fire stations. Upon receiving a surrendered infant, a medical questionnaire and information about the program will be provided to the surrendering parent. Completion of forms is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged. Confidentiality is guaranteed and anonymity will be respected if requested.

Upon arrival of the infant and parents at the station, a standard EMS (Emergency Medical Services) call would be initiated. During the process of treating or evaluating the child, the parent(s) would be given the opportunity to provide further information about the child's history. An ambulance response would be initiated by the medical call to transport the infant to a local county hospital. Coordination with other related agencies, such as Child Protective Services, would occur at the hospital.

Outside the scope of the Fire Department's involvement, once Child Protective Services assumes custody of the infant, normal child abandonment procedures would be followed and every effort will be made to place the infant in a temporary foster home or a with a pre-adoptive family. There is a guaranteed cooling-off period of 14 days during which the parent can reclaim the child. After this period has expired, the infant would be eligible for adoption.

It is important to note that any infant surrendered under this law must be left directly in the custody of personnel at the official "Safe Haven" site. Should an infant be left at an unattended facility, an investigation will ensue and the parent, if located, will face prosecution under child abandonment charges.

Redwood City's provider of liability coverage, Bay Cities Joint Powers Insurance Agency, has been consulted with respect to our participation in this program and has confirmed that we are covered to provide this service under our existing agreement.

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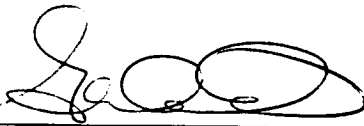
Alternative

Do not adopt Resolution, do not declare participation in the County of San Mateo "Safe Haven" program.

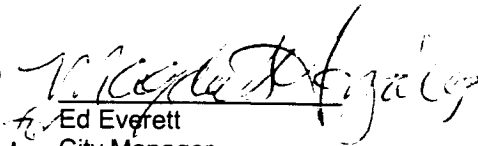
Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of the proposed Resolution is negligible, as the primary expenses will be for infant receiving kits, medical and informational forms, public information brochures (*Attachment 2*) and Safe Haven signage, all of which will be provided and paid for by the San Mateo County Prehospital Emergency Medical Services Group. Redwood City's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services will coordinate with the Fire Department to assist with the installation of multi-lingual "Safe Haven" signage on the premises of each fire station.

Training of fire department personnel and procedural review can be absorbed as part of the Fire Department's ongoing training program.



Gerald Kohlmann
Fire Chief



Ed Everett
City Manager

Attachments

- (1) State of California Health and Safety Code, Section 1255.7
- (2) Safe Haven Program informational material: *No Shame, No Blame, No Names*, produced by the State of California's Department of Social Services to promote the California Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

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RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF REDWOOD CITY AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ALLOW THE CITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO SAFE HAVEN PROGRAM BY DESIGNATING CITY FIRE STATIONS AS "SAFE HAVEN" SITES FOR THE SURRENDER OF NEWBORN INFANTS PURSUANT TO STATE OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 1255.7 AND TO EXECUTE ANY AGREEMENTS IMPLEMENTING SAME

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Redwood City is concerned with the occurrence of newborn infants being abandoned in San Mateo County; and

WHEREAS, the State has enacted Health and Safety Code section 1255.7, the "Newborn Abandonment Law," that provides no parent or person having lawful custody of a newborn 72 hours old or younger may be prosecuted for child abandonment if he or she voluntarily surrenders physical custody of the child to any employee on duty at a hospital emergency room or other safe surrender site that may be designated by a county board of supervisors; and

WHEREAS, desiring to improve access to places where infants may be safely surrendered, the San Mateo County Health Services Department ("County Health Services") will propose to the County Board of Supervisors that all fire stations within the County become "Safe Havens" under the Newborn Abandonment Law due to ease of accessibility and a low level of intimidation; and

WHEREAS, County Health Services has requested that each City/District in the County determine if its fire stations may be utilized as "Safe Haven" sites for the surrender of newborns; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Chief and City Manager have determined that it is feasible and desirable to participate in the "Safe Haven" program should the County Board of Supervises request that all fire stations located in the County serve as "Safe Haven" sites; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF REDWOOD CITY THAT:

1. The City Manager is authorized to have the City participate in the County of San Mateo "Safe Haven" program by designating City Fire Stations as "Safe Haven" sites for the surrender of newborn infants pursuant to State of California Health and Safety Code section 1255.7 and to execute any agreements implementing same.
2. This resolution will go into effect upon adoption.

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Attachment 1

1255.7. (a) (1) For purposes of this section, "safe-surrender site" means either of the following:

(A) A location designated by the board of supervisors of a county to be responsible for accepting physical custody of a minor child who is 72 hours old or younger from a parent or individual who has lawful custody of the child and who surrenders the child pursuant to Section 271.5 of the Penal Code.

(B) A location within a public or private hospital that is designated by that hospital to be responsible for accepting physical custody of a minor child who is 72 hours old or younger from a parent or individual who has lawful custody of the child and who surrenders the child pursuant to Section 271.5 of the Penal Code.

(2) For purposes of this section, "personnel" means any person who is an officer or employee of a safe-surrender site or who has staff privileges at the site.

(3) A hospital and any safe-surrender site designated by the county board of supervisors shall post a sign utilizing a statewide logo that has been adopted by the State Department of Social Services that notifies the public of the location where a minor child 72 hours old or younger may be safely surrendered pursuant to this section.

(b) Any personnel on duty at a safe-surrender site shall accept physical custody of a minor child 72 hours old or younger pursuant to this section if a parent or other individual having lawful custody of the child voluntarily surrenders physical custody of the child to personnel who are on duty at the safe-surrender site. Safe-surrender site personnel shall ensure that a qualified person does all of the following:

(1) Places a coded, confidential ankle bracelet on the child.

(2) Provides, or makes a good faith effort to provide, to the parent or other individual surrendering the child a copy of a unique, coded, confidential ankle bracelet identification in order to facilitate reclaiming the child pursuant to subdivision (f). However, possession of the ankle bracelet identification, in and of itself, does not establish parentage or a right to custody of the child.

(3) Provides, or makes a good faith effort to provide, to the parent or other individual surrendering the child a medical information questionnaire, which may be declined, voluntarily filled out and returned at the time the child is surrendered, or later filled out and mailed in the envelope provided for this purpose. This medical information questionnaire shall not require any identifying information about the child or the parent or individual surrendering the child, other than the identification code provided in the ankle bracelet placed on the child. Every questionnaire provided pursuant to this section shall begin with the following notice in no less than 12-point type:

NOTICE: THE BABY YOU HAVE BROUGHT IN TODAY MAY HAVE SERIOUS MEDICAL NEEDS IN THE FUTURE THAT WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT TODAY. SOME ILLNESSES, INCLUDING CANCER, ARE BEST TREATED WHEN WE KNOW ABOUT FAMILY MEDICAL HISTORIES. IN ADDITION, SOMETIMES RELATIVES ARE NEEDED FOR LIFE-SAVING TREATMENTS. TO MAKE SURE THIS BABY WILL HAVE A HEALTHY FUTURE, YOUR ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE FULLY IS ESSENTIAL. THANK YOU.

(c) Personnel of a safe-surrender site that has physical custody of a minor child pursuant to this section shall ensure that a medical screening examination and any necessary medical care is provided to the minor child. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the consent of the parent or other relative shall not be required to provide that care to the minor child.

(d) (1) As soon as possible, but in no event later than 48 hours after the physical custody of a child has been accepted pursuant to

State of California
Health/Safety Code
Section 1255.7

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this section, personnel of the safe-surrender site that has physical custody of the child shall notify child protective services or a county agency providing child welfare services pursuant to Section 16501 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, that the safe-surrender site has physical custody of the child pursuant to this section. In addition, any medical information pertinent to the child's health, including, but not limited to, information obtained pursuant to the medical information questionnaire described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) that has been received by or is in the possession of the safe-surrender site shall be provided to that child protective services or county agency.

(2) Any personal identifying information that pertains to a parent or individual who surrenders a child that is obtained pursuant to the medical information questionnaire is confidential and shall be exempt from disclosure by the child protective services or county agency under the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code). Any personal identifying information that pertains to a parent or individual who surrenders a child shall be redacted from any medical information provided to child protective services or the county agency providing child welfare services.

(e) Child protective services or the county agency providing child welfare services pursuant to Section 16501 of the Welfare and Institutions Code shall assume temporary custody of the child pursuant to Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code immediately on receipt of notice under subdivision (d). Child protective services or the county agency providing child welfare services pursuant to Section 16501 of the Welfare and Institutions Code shall immediately investigate the circumstances of the case and file a petition pursuant to Section 311 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. Child protective services or the county agency providing child welfare services pursuant to Section 16501 of the Welfare and Institutions Code shall immediately notify the State Department of Social Services of each child to whom this subdivision applies upon taking temporary custody of the child pursuant to Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. As soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after temporary custody is assumed, child protective services or the county agency providing child welfare services pursuant to Section 16501 of the Welfare and Institutions Code shall report all known identifying information concerning the child, except personal identifying information pertaining to the parent or individual who surrendered the child, to the California Missing Children Clearinghouse and to the National Crime Information Center.

(f) If, prior to the filing of a petition under subdivision (e), a parent or individual who has voluntarily surrendered a child pursuant to this section requests that the safe-surrender site that has physical custody of the child pursuant to this section return the child and the safe-surrender site still has custody of the child, personnel of the safe-surrender site shall either return the child to the parent or individual or contact a child protective agency if any personnel at the safe-surrender site knows or reasonably suspects that the child has been the victim of child abuse or neglect. The voluntary surrendering of a child pursuant to this section is not in and of itself a sufficient basis for reporting child abuse or neglect. The terms "child abuse," "child protective agency," "mandated reporter," "neglect," and "reasonably suspects" shall be given the same meanings as in Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 11164) of Part 4 of Title 1 of the Penal Code.

(g) Subsequent to the filing of a petition under subdivision (e), if within 14 days of the voluntary surrender described in this section the parent or individual who surrendered custody returns to

claim physical custody of the child, the child welfare agency shall verify the identity of the parent or individual, conduct an assessment of his or her circumstances and ability to parent, and request that the juvenile court dismiss the petition for dependency and order the release of the child, if the child welfare agency determines that none of the conditions described in subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive, of Section 319 of the Welfare and Institutions Code currently exist.

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(h) No safe-surrender site, or personnel of the safe-surrender site, that accepts custody of a surrendered child pursuant to this section shall be subject to civil, criminal, or administrative liability for accepting the child and caring for the child in the good faith belief that action is required or authorized by this section, including, but not limited to, instances where the child is older than 72 hours or the parent or individual surrendering the child did not have lawful physical custody of the child. This subdivision does not confer immunity from liability for personal injury or wrongful death, including, but not limited to, injury resulting from medical malpractice.

(i) Any identifying information that pertains to a parent or individual who surrenders a child pursuant to this section, that is obtained as a result of the questionnaire described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) or in any other manner, is confidential, shall be exempt from disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code), and shall not be disclosed by any personnel of a safe-surrender site that accepts custody of a child pursuant to this section.

(j) This section shall be repealed on January 1, 2006, unless a later enacted statute extends or repeals that date.

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Certainly we would prefer that women seek help while they are pregnant, not after giving birth, to receive proper medical care and counseling. But at the same time, we want to assure parents who choose not to keep their baby that they will not go to jail if they deliver their babies to safe hands in a hospital emergency room.

**The California Safely
Surrendered Baby Law:**

Allows a distressed birth parent(s) to legally, confidentially, and safely surrender their baby

Provides a safe place for babies

Protects the parent(s) from arrest or prosecution for abandonment as long as the baby has not been abused or neglected

Does not require that names be given when the baby is surrendered

Permits parents to bring a baby within 3 days of birth to any hospital emergency room in California

**In California, no one ever
has to abandon a child again.**

**no shame.
no blame.
no names.**

**now there's a way
to safely surrender
your baby**



State of California
Gray Davis, Governor
Health and Human Services Agency
Grantland Johnson, Secretary
Department of Social Services
Rita Saenz, Director



5.3 B-9

It's a new law. Under this law, a person may surrender their baby confidentially. As long as the baby has not been abused or neglected, the person may do so without fear of arrest or prosecution.

A distressed parent who is unable or unwilling to care for an infant can legally, confidentially and safely surrender their baby within 3 days of birth. All that is required is that the baby be brought to a hospital emergency room in California. If there are additional places, they will be listed on the back of this brochure. As long as the child shows no signs of abuse or neglect, no name or other information is required. A bracelet will be placed on the baby for identification. A matching bracelet will be given to the parent. The bracelet will help connect the parent to the baby if the parent wants the baby back.

In most cases, a parent will bring in the baby. The law allows another person to bring in the baby if they have legal custody.

No. A parent can bring in a baby anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

No. Nothing is required. However, hospital personnel will give the parent a medical information questionnaire that is designed to gather family medical history. This could be very useful in caring for the child but it is up to the parent to complete it.

The baby will be examined and given medical treatment, if needed. Then the baby will be placed in a foster or pre-adoptive home.

Once the parent(s) has safely turned over the baby, they are free to go.

The parent(s) may take the bracelet back to the hospital. Hospital personnel will provide information about the baby.

The purpose of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law is to protect babies from being hurt or killed because they were abandoned.

You may have heard tragic stories of babies left in dumpsters or public toilets. The persons who committed these acts may have been under severe emotional distress. The mothers may have hidden their pregnancies, fearful of what would happen if their families found out. Because they were afraid and had nowhere to turn for help, they abandoned their infants.

Abandoning a baby puts the child in extreme danger. It is also illegal. Too often, it results in the baby's death. Because of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law, this tragedy doesn't ever have to happen in California again.

At 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 25, 2002, a healthy newborn baby was brought to St. Bernardine Medical Center in San Bernardino under the provisions of the California Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

This baby was the eighteenth child protected under California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law. As the law states, the baby's mother did not have to identify herself. When the baby was brought to the emergency room, he was examined by a pediatrician, who determined that the baby was healthy and doing fine. He was placed in a foster home for short-term care while the adoption process was started.



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

5.3 B-10

To: City Managers
Fire Protection District Board of Directors
Marcia Raines, Director, Environmental Services

From: *BP* Barbara Pletz, EMS Administrator, Health Services
MD Maureen Davidson, Public Information Officer/Legislative Liaison,
Human Services Agency

Date: November 8, 2004

Subject: Proposal to Make Fire Stations Safe Havens for Surrendered Babies

Legislation passed in 2000 (SB 1368 Brulte) creates "Safe Havens" for the surrender of infants 72 hours old or less. The intent is to eliminate deaths of unwanted babies. The legislation creates a "no questions asked" process to surrender an unwanted baby to County Child Protective Services. Since the law was enacted 61 babies have been safely surrendered in California.

Safe Haven locations are hospitals or other sites designated by the County Board of Supervisors. We are proposing that all fire stations within the County become Safe Havens since they are more accessible, and less intimidating, than hospitals within our communities.

The costs associated with materials for the program (e.g., signage, surrender kits) will be funded by the San Mateo County Prehospital Emergency Medical Services Group.

Attached are some informational materials about the program and the draft procedure for accepting the surrendered baby.

We would like to have the Board designate all fire stations as Safe Surrender sites in December and implement the program in January. In order to publicize the program most effectively, it will be best if all fire stations be designated.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if you do not want your fire stations to participate.

Barbara Pletz (650) 573-2579
Maureen Davidson (650) 802-6433

Cc: Fire Chiefs
Maureen Borland
Charlene Silva

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

DRAFT November 8, 2004

Safely Surrendered Baby Procedure For Fire Stations

1. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors has designated local fire stations as "safe-surrendered sites" for babies in accordance with Health & Safety Code Section 1255.7.
2. Each fire station shall display the official State Department of Social Services sign.
3. Each fire station will keep on hand at least five Safe Haven brochures explaining how to reclaim a surrendered newborn within the allowed 14-day period.
4. Safe Haven packets can be obtained from the San Mateo County Prehospital Emergency Medical Services Authority (JPA). (The JPA will procure the packets from the approved state vendor.)
5. Each fire station will keep on hand at least five (5) Newborn Safe Surrender Packets. Each fire engine will also keep one (1) packet on board in the event they are on a "move up" to another fire station. Each packet shall contain:
 - a. The written procedure for accepting the newborn.
 - b. One smaller coded ankle identification bracelet for the newborn
 - c. One larger coded identification bracelet for the adult who is surrendering the newborn.
 - d. Safe Haven newborn medical questionnaires, one in English and one in Spanish.
 - e. Safe Haven fact sheets, one in English and one in Spanish.
6. Procedure for accepting infant:
 - a. Welcome the person surrendering the infant. Do not be judgmental (this is an emotional and difficult time for the person).
 - b. Assess infant for immediate medical needs and treat per San Mateo County EMS protocol. If the infant appears to have an urgent medical condition contact Public Safety Dispatch immediately for a 911 ambulance response. Do not delay treating the infant in order to complete the next "accepting" steps. Proceed to 6.c., and 6.d., when it is medically safe to do so.
 - c. Place the smaller coded ankle bracelet on the infant and record the code on a prehospital patient care record.
 - d. Give the surrendering person the:
 - 1) larger coded identification bracelet
 - 2) postage prepaid envelope
 - 3) Safe Haven newborn medical questionnaire
 - 4) Safe Haven fact sheet
 - e. If person seems willing assist them with completing the medical questionnaire at the station. Give the completed questionnaire to

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Safely Surrendered Baby Law

To: Fire Chiefs Association of San Mateo County of San Mateo
From: Maureen Davidson, San Mateo County Human Services Agency
Public Information Officer & Legislative Liaison
Date: September 13, 2004
Proposal: **All Fire Stations in SMC be declared Safe Havens**

Overview (see documents attached)

- The Safely Surrendered Baby Law, SB 1368, (Senator James Brulte) became effective January 1, 2001.
For a copy of complete legislative language:
http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/99-00/bill/sen/sb_13511400/sb_1368_bill_20000928_chaptered.html
- 61 Babies Safely Surrendered in California: 2001-August 30, 2004

Summary of Fire Station Responsibilities and Costs:

- Board of Supervisors designation (Through a letter from Fire Chiefs Association to BOS) as Safe Havens
- Purchase and display a sign and keep 3 "surrender kits" at each station
- Designate employees required to take custody of baby
- That employee takes custody of infant, calls CPS Hotline, who will take infant to hospital for medical screening, then to shelter
- Upon taking custody
 - provide surrendering parent a medical information questionnaire (optional for parent)
 - place coded ankle bracelet on infant, give copy to parent along with
 - information about how to reclaim baby if they change their mind
- Costs:
 - 18x20 aluminum sign: \$21, or
 - 10 3/8 x 12" paper sign: \$ 7
 - Newborn Safe Surrender Kits \$5 each or \$3 ea for 100

Human Services Agency Commitment:

- Produce brochures in very simple language, multiple languages
- Distribute countywide
- Conduct media campaign

5.3B.13

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Room 2032
Sacramento, CA 95834-4900
TEL (916) 445-0503
FAX (916) 327-2156

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FAX (650) 340-1661

Hiram W. Johnson State Office Building
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San Francisco, CA 94102
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FAX (415) 557-7864

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California State Senate

SENATOR JACKIE SPEIER

REPRESENTING THE SAN FRANCISCO AND SAN MATEO COUNTIES



COMMITTEES

CHAIR

- Insurance
- Select Committee on Government Oversight

MEMBER

- Appropriations
- Energy, Utilities and Communications
- Transportation
- Joint Committee on Legislative Audit
- Select Committee on Bay Area Transportation

March 2, 2003

Chief Bill Reilly
Burlingame Fire Department
1399 Rollins Road
Burlingame, CA 94010

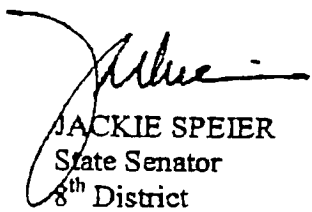
Dear Chief Reilly,

I am writing to request your department's participation in the state's "Safely Surrendered Baby Law". This law was enacted in January of 2001 when state lawmakers like myself took a proactive approach to reducing the number of abandoned infant cases. This law allows mothers to leave their unwanted newborns at hospitals and firehouses without facing criminal charges.

Sacramento County recently joined Los Angeles County as the only two fire departments participating in this program. Since the inception of the law 20 babies have been successfully surrendered in the state, two at fire stations in Los Angeles and one at a fire station in Sacramento. During the same period 38 infants were abandoned illegally, with only 21 found alive.

As you can see, there is still a need for safe havens where trained professionals can receive these precious newborns. For additional information please contact Brian Birkett of my district staff at (415) 557-7857 or the CA Department of Social Services' Public Affairs Director, Blanca Castro at (916) 657-3604. I hope that you will consider adding this service to your department so that even the smallest Californians are protected.

All the best,


JACKIE SPEIER
State Senator
8th District

KJS:bb

no shame. no blame. no names.

Safely Surrendered Baby Campaign

FAST FACTS
5.3B-14



January 2003

- ◆ The Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) law was signed into law by Governor Davis on September 2000 and went into effect on January 1, 2001.
- ◆ The purpose of the SSB law is to allow a mother or person with lawful custody to bring an unwanted baby three days old or younger to a hospital without prosecution for child abandonment. No names are required.
- ◆ The law allows for at least 14-days during which the mother may change her mind and reclaim her baby.
- ◆ Babies who are safely surrendered at a hospital are given medical treatment and placed in a foster home or pre-adoptive home.
- ◆ Since the law went into effect, 16 babies have been safely surrendered in California as of December 2002.
- ◆ There is no profile of women most likely to abandon their infants. The cases of abandonment show women of all socio-economic groups, ages, race and ethnicity, and educational attainment levels. The target audience for this campaign is females 14 to 38 years of age.
- ◆ Forty-one other states have passed "safe haven" laws. However, most of those states did not earmark funds for a public awareness campaign and are not engaged in any direct outreach to the target audience.
- ◆ California selected the campaign used by the State of New Jersey called "No Shame, No Blame, No Names." California chose this campaign because of its comprehensive approach and non-judgmental message.
- ◆ The initial campaign uses \$500,000 from the California Department of Social Services' Child Abuse Prevention program, which has a budget of \$19.9 million.
- ◆ The second phase of the campaign will be expanded to include television and will be funded with a \$1 million grant from "First Five," formerly the California Commission on Children and Families.