

Good Afternoon Chairman Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

For the record, my name is Dawson Holle, and I have the honor of representing the great people of District 31. Today, I come before you to introduce House Bill 1205—legislation with the potential to save lives and provide hope to parents facing unimaginable crises.

I want to begin by painting two starkly different pictures for you.

In the first, a maintenance worker hears a faint cry coming from behind a gas station dumpster. Upon investigating, he finds a newborn baby—abandoned, cold, and wrapped in nothing but a towel. Thankfully, this baby survived. But the tragic reality is that not all stories like this have happy endings. Across the country, too many infants are left in unsafe, life-threatening conditions because their parents feel they have no other choice.

Now, imagine another scenario. A mother, overwhelmed by fear and desperation, comes across a Safe Haven Baby Box. She gently places her baby inside the climate-controlled, secure compartment. The moment the door closes, first responders are automatically alerted, and within minutes, medical professionals are providing care. This time, the mother walks away knowing she made the safest and most compassionate choice for her child.

This second story isn't hypothetical—it is already happening. In states like Indiana, Ohio, and Arkansas, Safe Haven Baby Boxes have saved dozens of lives. These are real children who are now growing up in loving families, given a second chance because their parents had access to a safe, compassionate option during a moment of crisis.

Why HB 1205 is Needed

Here in North Dakota, we take pride in being a state that values life, family, and community. Supporting this legislation is not just about preventing tragedies—it is about offering parents in crisis a safe and legal option and ensuring that no child is left in harm's way due to fear or desperation.

What HB 1205 Does

HB 1205 allows a mother to safely surrender her newborn, under 60 days old, to a Safe Haven Baby Box. To support the successful implementation of this initiative, this bill originally included an appropriation request of \$50,000.

Let me clarify why this appropriation was removed in the House. When HB 1205 unanimously passed out of the House Human Services Committee, it was then referred to House Appropriations. However, I believe there was confusion between the existing Safe Haven law and the Safe Haven Baby Box program. As a result, the Appropriations Committee initially issued a "Do Not Pass" recommendation. However, following significant support from fellow representatives, the committee reconsidered the bill and ultimately passed the policy but removed the fiscal note, allowing charitable organizations to fundraise for these boxes instead.

Each Safe Haven Baby Box costs approximately \$20,000, with an annual program fee of \$500. The \$50,000 appropriation in this bill would have covered the cost of two baby boxes, with remaining funds allocated for advertising and public awareness. It is important to emphasize that this is a pilot program, allowing us to evaluate its impact before further expansion.

We Cannot Afford to Wait

Members of the committee, every day that passes without Safe Haven Baby Boxes is another day where a parent in crisis may feel there is no safe option for their child. Every day represents another opportunity to save a life.

This legislation is not just about baby boxes—it is about hope. It is about providing a lifeline to parents who feel trapped, ensuring that every child has the chance to grow up in a safe and loving environment.

I respectfully urge this committee to support HB 1205 and take this critical step toward protecting North Dakota's most vulnerable infants.

I sincerely hope you will consider the amendment to restore the \$50,000 appropriation to ensure proper funding for this program. However, if you choose not to do so, I understand and simply ask for your support in passing the policy itself, allowing charitable organizations to fundraise and implement these boxes independently.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to stand for any questions.

How a Safe Haven Baby Box Works? Watch the video below

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4flui02-Bkc&t=34s>

ALABAMA SAFE HAVEN BABY BOX

ALABAMA CAJA DE REFUGIO SEGURO PARA BEBÉ



As per Alabama Code 26-25-1 this is a designated Safe Haven Surrender Site. Baby may be placed in Safe Haven Baby Box or with any emergency personnel according to Alabama's Safe Haven Law.

Según el Título 26-25-1 del Código de Alabama, este es un sitio de entrega de refugio seguro designado. El bebé puede ser colocado en Safe Haven Baby Box o con cualquier personal de emergencia de acuerdo con la Ley de Refugio Seguro de Iowa.

To Use Baby Box / Para usar la caja de bebé:

1. Open the Access Portal Door
Abra la puerta de acceso
2. Place the Infant Inside the Medical Bassinet; and
Coloque al bebé dentro de la cuna médica y;
3. Close the Access Portal Door to Engage the Lock.
Cierre la puerta del portal de acceso para activar el candado.

Any Questions Please Call 1-866-99BABY1
Si tiene alguna pregunta favor de llamar al 1-866-992-2291

www.SHBB.org



Safe Haven Baby Box Drop Off

Caja de Refugio Seguro para entregar al bebé.

Please do not open door
unless you are in need
of services.

Favor de NO abrir la puerta si no necesita de este servicio.



Silent Alarm Will Activate.

La compuerta abierta activará una alarma silenciosa.



Safe Haven
Baby Boxes

Safe Haven Crisis Line

Safe Haven Línea Directa de Crisis

1 - 866 - 99BABY1

ABOUT THE BABY BOX

What does the installation of a baby box in a building require?

Installing a Baby Box is as simple as installing a window in a building. It is very rare that a permit or additional alterations are needed on a building for installation. The Baby Box simply slides into the wall, insulation is added around the outside of the Baby Box, and it is sealed on both sides. The electronics in the Baby Box can be connected to a building's existing alarm system or will be set up with alarm monitoring with a 3rd party vendor.

How is the Baby Box safe in locations where there are extreme temperatures?

There is a heating and cooling unit inside the baby box to work with the interior of the building to ensure the proper temperature is constant.

Are there security cameras to ensure the safety of emergency personnel?

The only requirement for the Safe Haven Baby Box program is to not have a camera directly on the baby box. Cameras are allowed in all other areas around the building. To date, no location has had an issue with this requirement, nor has any location declined the Safe Haven Baby Boxes program because of it.

What happens if something fails on the Baby Box?

Weekly testing and daily visual checks ensure the Baby Box is functioning properly. Should any issues arise, the Safe Haven Baby Box policy is to have a representative at the location hang a sign (provided) that the baby box is not in service and the door will be locked. Safe Haven Baby Boxes will immediately notify the hotline counselor(s) and update the website and other social media sites to show the location is temporarily not in service. The average time a Baby Box is out of service is about 5 business days.

What happens if the Baby Box Alarm fails?

The Baby Box is set up with 3 alarms that are each triggered by an action and not dependent upon an initial alarm. Daily visual checks and weekly alarm tests ensure the function of a Baby Box. If a Baby Box loses power, the device initiates a 911 call. There is also a battery backup built in in case a location does not have a generator.

Has a baby box ever been improperly used?

Not a single Baby Box has had damage or been vandalized in the past 4 years of being in service. Occasionally a curious person has opened the box without reading the sign about the alarm, but this is very rare. In December 2019, a crate of kittens was placed in a Baby Box. While this is an instance of improper use, it did serve as an opportunity to further educate the community and surrounding areas about the availability of the Baby Box and the Safe Haven law.

1. Have the Safe Haven Baby Boxes been tested?

The Safe Haven Baby Box is tested. At every stage of design, development and deployment, the Box undergoes stringent testing. While there are no standards that exist, the Safe Haven Baby Box organization is developing standards by adopting the most stringent requirements.

The ultimate test came on November 7, 2017 at the CoolSpring Fire Department. A courageous mother anonymously surrendered Baby Hope in the Safe Haven Baby Box located in Michigan City, IN. After the notification system notified the first responders flawlessly, she was safely received and evaluated under the Safe Haven Baby Box Protocol for Surrender and the laws of Indiana. It is noted the Box performed within the design parameters and the surrender is considered legal under the Indiana Safe Haven law.

2. Why are the Safe Haven Boxes not regulated by the FDA or the CSPC?

It has been determined by the FDA that the Safe Haven Baby Box, like the baby drawers in Arizona, is not a medical device and does not require FDA approval. The baby box and the baby drawer are not available for sale to the public and do not require CSPC regulation.

3. Are the Safe Haven Baby Boxes and baby drawers UL listed and approved?

UL approval is not legally required and there is no legislation mandating certification by UL or any other agency, public or private in the US. SHBB partners with a third party for performance testing to ensure the baby boxes function properly.

4. Do baby boxes exist that are not from the Safe Haven Baby Boxes organization?

Yes. In fact, "baby hatches" existed in one form or another for centuries and was quite common in medieval times. Modern versions appear in other countries, including Germany, Switzerland, Pakistan, and Malaysia.

Arizona also has baby drawers and are available at designated hospitals. (For more information, please see the back of this page.)

5. Is Safe Haven Baby Boxes the only organization that offers complete anonymity?

For individuals contacting our National Safe Haven Crisis Hotline, contact is confidential and anonymous, should the caller wish. For individuals using our Safe Haven Baby Boxes, there are no cameras, so the individual remains anonymous.

The Hotline and counselors are supervised by a Clinical Staff Psychologist with over 25 years of crisis pregnancy hotline experience. We will not ask for a name. We do ask for location so we can provide information on the laws that apply and resources that may be available. Our goal is to provide the mothers-in-crisis with the resources that allow themselves to stabilize their situation and have time to make a decision that is in the best interest of themselves and their child.