



*Representing the Diocese of Fargo
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To: Senate Human Services
From: Christopher Dodson, Co-Director
Date: March 11, 2025
Re: House Bill 1205 — Newborn Safety Devices

The North Dakota Catholic Conference supports House Bill 1205 to authorize newborn infant safety devices (also called baby boxes) under the state's safe haven law.

We know that there are women in complex circumstances who will decide to relinquish their child after giving birth. When that happens, the safety of the child is paramount. By authorizing the installation of newborn infant safety devices in hospitals and other locations authorized by the Department of Health and Human Services, HB 1205 can help ensure that the child's life and health is protected in these situations.

This bill embraces both mother and child, providing women with a last resort that protects their own safety and that of their child. It gives birth mothers the security of knowing that their children will find love and stability.

As mentioned, HB 1205 is about safety. It does not negate the need to ensure that, whenever possible, mothers and children remain united and have every opportunity to thrive. We must continue to work to improve conditions for pregnant women and new mothers, especially those struggling with mental illness, drug addiction, domestic violence, and extreme poverty.

The Catholic Church stands ready and willing to walk alongside women experiencing challenges during pregnancy and parenthood. The Church's initiative, Walking with Moms in Need, seeks to ensure that no woman is alone when faced with such challenges. Pregnancy resource centers are also an invaluable source of support and can be found across North Dakota. Together, we must build a society where all women and children can flourish.

We respectfully ask for a **Do Pass** recommendation on House Bill 1205.