

I am writing in opposition to HB 2901 "Relating to newborn safety devices".

There is absolutely no need to amend the Safe Haven Law in Oregon to include safe haven baby boxes. There is no need for baby boxes to be a part of how our state supports families and children in crisis. The Safe Haven Law already provides an avenue for a new mother in crisis to relinquish her child. The difference is that anonymous relinquishment strips that child, who will grow to be an adult, of their identity and dignity with absolutely no hope in the future of regaining that identity. Ask any adult adoptee about this as it's an important issue for those of us that have been relinquished. That's why I feel fortunate to have been born and adopted in Oregon, a state that made my original birth certificate and adoption papers accessible. A state that appears to be supportive of adoptee rights. Adding baby boxes is a step in the complete opposite direction. Baby boxes will create future adoptees who will have absolutely no information of their birth identity, ethnic identity, or cultural identity. Nor will they have any hope of finding that information as an adult. They will grow up with a falsified birth certificate as all adoptees do, but will not have the privilege of accessing the original. It's essential to consider the long term effects this will have on these human beings. We already have a law in place to protect them short term and this law does not need to be amended.

I don't see any information regarding the financial impact of this amendment. So, I figure the cost of the installation of a baby box, which is estimated at \$11,000-16,000 plus the cost of maintenance and the salary and benefits of 24-hour staffing. It seems to me that money could be better spent supporting mothers and children in crisis. **Let's prevent the need to abandon a baby in the first place.** Correct me if I'm wrong, but Oregon is a state that prefers family preservation. In my profession, I've seen this for myself by witnessing foster parents, natural parents and social workers who work in the foster system towards the goal of reunification. A baby box is not a path towards family preservation. It severs that biological connection immediately and indefinitely. So instead of promoting this method of abandonment, can these resources be utilized to either support a new mother to keep her baby (very few women actually want to relinquish their children. Please reference the work by Gretchen Sisson, PhD). But if relinquishment is the only way, then continue to rely on the Safe Haven Law as it is. I urge you all to vote down this bill.