

Submitter: Denice Searcy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2901

NO on HB 2901

Please scrap this bill. It makes no sense and if Oregon already has a "Safe Haven" law, why do we need this??

This bill modifies the Safe Haven law to allow a parent to anonymously leave an infant in a newborn safety device. It also allows an authorized facility to install a newborn safety device and prescribes standards for newborn safety devices. Additionally, this bill requires a facility accepting newborn babies install a newborn safety device, or accept the baby in person. How much would this cost at the onset and to maintain and staff?

One requirement is the baby has no evidence of abuse, how would the facility know if there is no abuse if the newborn is just dropped off anonymously? Would an anonymous drop-off violate the rights of the child both legally and ethically?

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. 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. Instead concentrate on preventing the need to abandon a baby in the first place. Oregon is a state that prefers family preservation. A better answer may be that foster parents, natural parents and social workers who work in the foster system should work 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? But if relinquishment is the only way, then continue to rely on the Safe Haven Law as it is.

Please vote no on HB 2901. Thank you.