



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

# NEWS

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## **Governor Quinn Signs Legislation to Keep Newborn Children Safe**

### *New Laws Increase Protections for Newborns Through Increased Education and Resources for Parents*

CHICAGO - July 20, 2010. Governor Pat Quinn today signed legislation into law that will help protect Illinois' newborn children from preventable injury and death. The new laws require hospitals to provide new parents with information on how to prevent sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), increase penalties for causing a baby to die by shaking it, provide better resources to parents who relinquish newborn children, and educate parents about caring for premature newborns.

"There is no greater gift than the birth of a baby, and we must do everything in our power to keep our youngest citizens safe from harm," said Governor Quinn. "These new laws will help protect our newborns and ensure that parents receive the information they need to properly care for them and stop preventable deaths."

House Bill 5930, sponsored by Sen. A.J. Wilhelmi (D-Joliet) and Rep. Emily McAsey (D-Lockport), requires hospitals to provide free SIDS educational materials to parents or guardians of newborns. The materials will include information to help parents understand SIDS and lower their child's risk for it. Hospital staff will be required to review the materials with new parents and discuss ways to reduce the likelihood of SIDS prior to their discharge from the hospital. The new law is effective Jan. 1, 2011.

House Bill 5762, sponsored by Rep. Michael Carberry (D-Evergreen Park) and Sen. Gary Forby (D-Benton), requires anyone found guilty of causing a baby's death by shaking it to register with the Illinois State Police's Child Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Database. Individuals registered with the database are subject to law enforcement and community notification requirements, and are prohibited from holding jobs that involve contact with children, such as in schools or libraries. The new law is effective Jan. 1, 2011.

Governor Quinn also signed House Bill 5459, sponsored by Sen. Donne Trotter (D-Chicago) and Rep. Elizabeth Coulson (R-Glenview). The new law replaces the confusing, 14-page packet provided to parents who relinquish their newborn child at a Safe Haven site with three easy-to-read one-page brochures. Under the new law, relinquishing parents will receive information about the Safe Haven Law and how to register for the Illinois Adoption Registry. They will also receive a vital health fact sheet with information on post-partum health issues, and a tear-off mailer that allows them to provide important medical information regarding the child. The new law is effective immediately.

Senate Bill 3273 requires the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to post information on its website for the parents of premature infants. The information will include: proper care for premature infants, unique health issues affecting them, and methods for preventing infectious diseases. Sponsored by Sen. Pamela Althoff (R-Crystal Lake) and Rep. Jack Franks (D-Woodstock), the new law is effective immediately.

According to the March of Dimes, late preterm births in Illinois increased by nearly 18 percent from 1996 to 2006. Around 71 percent of all preterm births within the United States are classified as late preterm. These infants have higher rates of re-hospitalization, depression at birth, and admission to a neonatal intensive care unit.

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