



# Save Abandoned Babies Foundation

Illinois is a safe haven state. Tell a friend. Talk about it. You might save a life.

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## For Immediate Release

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## SAFE HAVEN LAW EXTENDED TO 30 DAYS

Chicago, IL, DECEMBER 31, 2009 — The Save Abandoned Babies Foundation announced that, effective New Year's Day, Illinois' "safe haven law" extends the time a parent has to relinquish an unharmed newborn to 30 days under Illinois' Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act.

Illinois' safe haven law provides a safe and legal option to a parent who might otherwise abandon a newborn baby in a dumpster or other unsafe place. Parents who feel they have no alternatives can anonymously place their unharmed newborn in the hands of trusted authorities at designated safe havens with no fear of prosecution for abandonment. In Illinois, safe havens are police stations, fire stations, hospitals and emergency medical care facilities. The law gives these children a chance at life in safe, loving homes.

House Bill 3925, sponsored by Sen. Donne Trotter (D-Chicago) and Rep. Beth Coulson (R-Glenview), had overwhelming support in the General Assembly, passing with a unanimous vote in both the House and Senate.

"Passing the safe haven law has been one of my most rewarding accomplishments in the Legislature. I will continue to work enthusiastically to strengthen the law. As the 14th state to enact a safe haven law, Illinois has served as a model to the nation. Today all 50 states have enacted similar safe haven laws," Rep. Coulson said.

Since the passage of the original law in 2001, 53 newborn babies have been taken to safe havens in Illinois. As a result, these children are in permanent homes. Tragically, 58 other newborns were abandoned. Even more tragic, 28 of those babies did not survive.

"Safe havens save lives," said Dawn Geras, founder of the Foundation, "but the reality is that most people still don't know the safe haven law exists. If people don't know about the law, how can they be expected to use it?"

Protecting children is a shared, community responsibility. Public awareness of this life-saving option is vital to the youngest and most vulnerable among us. There aren't many opportunities in life to make a life or death difference. This is one of them. Please do your part to make sure staff at your local safe havens are aware of their responsibilities under this law and to alert parents in crisis that this option exists.

Crisis counselors are available to provide safe haven law information 24 hours a day by calling toll free 1-888-510-BABY (2229). More information is available at [www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org](http://www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org).

The Save Abandoned Babies Foundation is a 100-percent volunteer 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to saving the lives of newborn infants who might otherwise be unsafely abandoned in Illinois.

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