

Proposal 2007-7 (Emergency)
Support for a Baby Safe Haven law in Nebraska

Subject

Nebraska Safe Haven Act

Proposed by

Nebraska Nurses Association, District III and IV

Contact Person

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Type of Proposal

New action proposal

Rationale

Infant abandonment is a topic that tears at our hearts. One of two things can happen in these cases. Some infants are left in basement closets. Some in garbage dumpsters. Some in the bed of a creek. Rarely, are these infants found before dying. Other infants are left in the care of professionals, health care professionals at a hospital, for example. Recently, two mothers have abandoned their infants at hospitals in southeast Nebraska. One left her infant after having the baby at the hospital; knowing her child would be cared for. She faces charges of child abandonment. One had her baby away from a hospital but brought it and left it in a bathroom at a hospital. This mother believed Nebraska had a Safe Haven law and left it knowing it would be found and cared for. Both babies are safe at this time.

Nebraska is one of two states left to adopt a Safe Haven law. There are no numbers available for the number of mothers and babies that would be impacted by this law, if it is passed. Florida has saved 81 babies since it enacted the law in July 2000. In comparison, since that time, 37 babies were left in unsafe places (14 found alive, 23 dead). <http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com/babiesstatistics.asp>

Recommendations

The Nebraska Nurses Association shall:

1. Provide education for members and the general public about the impact of having a Safe Haven law in Nebraska.
2. Explore with other agencies/associations their position on a Safe Haven law.

Past House Actions

The Safe Haven Act has come before the Legislature in one form or another for 4 different sessions. Last session, two bills (LB6 and LB157) were drafted and were converged into one. It failed to pass.

Relation to Mission and Vision Statements

This relates to mission of the NNA as it states, "...and to work for the improvement of health standards and availability of health care services for all people" (Adopted October, 1995, NNA House of Delegates). Passage of this bill directly and positively impacts the health of infants left in the care of professionals designated by the bill. The vision states that the NNA will be "...an advocate for Nebraska consumers on issues related to health" and an "advocate or statewide quality healthcare" (Affirmed December 4, 2004, NNA Board of Directors).

References

NNA Mission and Vision statements

Hundredth Legislature-First Session-2007, LB6 and LB157

Hundredth Legislature-First Session-2007, Committee Statement LB157

Hundredth Legislature-First Session-2007, Judiciary Committee Transcript, January 17

Hundredth Legislature-First Session-2007, Floor Debate Transcript, March 9

Hundredth Legislature-First Session-2007, Floor Debate Transcript, March 12

Hundredth Legislature-First Session-2007, Floor Debate Transcript, April 23

Hundredth Legislature-First Session-2007, Floor Debate Transcript, May 9

Hundredth Legislature-First Session-2007, Floor Debate Transcript, May 10

<http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com/babiesstatistics.asp>

Proposed Implementation Activities

1. The Nebraska Nurses Association shall publish information regarding Nebraska's proposed Safe Haven Act via the Nebraska Nurse and the NNA web site.
2. The Nebraska Nurses Association Commission on Advocacy and Representation shall identify this legislation as a priority for the 2008 Legislative Platform.