



IOWA HOUSE DEMOCRATS

BILL SUMMARY

Safe Haven Act SF 360

Status of Bill: House Calendar

Committee: Human Resources (21-0), (Senate, 48-0)

Research Analyst: Kelsey Thien; 515-281-6972; kelsey.thien@legis.iowa.gov

Lead Democrat: Rep. Abdul-Samad

Floor Manager: Rep. Holt

Background

Iowa implemented the Safe Haven Act in 2001 in response to a teenager leaving her dead newborn daughter in a snowbank. Since 2002, 30 infants have been relinquished to the state, and medical costs incurred by medical facilities are billed through Medicaid.

Parents are able to leave their newborns at an institutional facility which is defined in Code as a hospital, residential care facility, nursing facility, intermediate care facility for persons with mental illness, or an intermediate care facility for persons with an intellectual disability.

There is recourse for either parent of the newborn to request custody of the child if they can prove they are the parent, and if it is determined to be in the best interest of the child.

All 50 states have a version of this law.

Summary

Senate File 360 expands the eligibility of an infant that can be turned over as part of the Newborn Safe Haven Act from up to fourteen days to up to thirty days. In addition, the bill allows a parent to make telephone contact with a 911 service and relinquish physical custody of the newborn infant, without expressing intent to again assume physical custody, to a first responder who responds to the 911 telephone call. If the physical custody of a newborn infant is relinquished to a first responder, the first responder is required to transport the newborn infant to the nearest institutional health facility. The first responder must also provide any parental identification or medical history information to the institutional health facility.

Any transcripts or recording of a 911 service telephone call that is made for the purpose of an individual's good faith effort to voluntarily release custody of a newborn infant and any identifying information concerning the individual must be kept confidential. The transcripts or recording of a 911 service telephone call cannot be inspected or the contents disclosed except covered under current law. **First responder** is defined as an emergency medical care provider, a registered nurse staffing an authorized service program, a physician assistant staffing an authorized service program, a fire fighter, or a peace officer.

SF 360 passed the Senate last year 48-0.