



a project of colorado nonprofit development center

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KEY POINTS

The Colorado Safe Haven law was passed in 2000. It allows a parent to anonymously relinquish a newborn child, up to 72 hours old, to personnel at a fire station or hospital without fear of prosecution.

In Colorado, 32 babies have been safely relinquished since the inception of the law.

The outreach campaign centers on a toll-free, multilingual hotline where a parent in crisis can call to learn more about their option under Safe Haven law. 1-888-510-BABY

The key to solving the problem of infant abandonment is awareness. Start the conversation. Tell someone about the Safe Haven law. We can't predict who will need to know. Shouldn't everyone know?

BACKGROUND

Colorado Safe Haven for Newborns, a nonprofit organization, was created to get the word out about the law, empowering new mothers with information about a safe alternative to abandonment.

Vision:

To protect desperate parents, unwanted newborns and the community from the tragedy of an abandoned baby through awareness of the Colorado Safe Haven law.

Mission:

To prevent the abandonment of newborn babies by informing the Colorado community about the Safe Haven law and inspiring a parent in crisis to use it.

History:

According to a 1998 survey by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 105 newborns were reported as abandoned in public places that year. However, experts estimate that at least twice as many newborns were abandoned but never discovered. Based upon recorded infant abandonment events, the most common profile for the mother is a 19-yr-old college student with no history of substance abuse or criminal activity. These desperate mothers isolate themselves, deny their pregnancies, and commit an unthinkable crime because they believe they have no alternative.

In April 2000, The Colorado General Assembly passed the Colorado Safe Haven for Newborns law. Colorado criminal law states that abandoning a baby is punishable by up to 26 years in prison. The Safe Haven law provides an affirmative defense against prosecution if a parent relinquishes the baby, unharmed, at a hospital or fire station within 72 hours after birth.

During a two-week period in July 2004, three abandoned babies were found in the Denver area. All of the babies were dead. These mothers, in crisis, were unaware of the Safe Haven law. In November 2004, a group of concerned citizens formed the Colorado Safe Haven for Newborns organization to promote public awareness of the law. In December 2004, the organization was accepted as a project of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center, a 501 (c)(3) organization.

Colorado Safe Haven for Newborns wants to ensure that every newborn baby is placed in a safe environment, that parents are free from a lifetime of guilt and incarceration, and that the community is free from the emotional and financial expense wrought by the tragedy of infant abandonment. And they want to fulfill the hopes of a family waiting to adopt a child.

Crisis/Counseling Hotline Number: 1-888-510-BABY