

34th Alaska State Legislature

State Capitol, Room 405
Juneau, AK 99801
(907)465-4457



1292 Sadler Way, Suite 308
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 451-8172

Representative Frank Tomaszewski

House Bill 64: Surrender of Infants; Inf. Safety Device v.A

“An Act relating to the surrender of infants; and providing for an effective date.”

In 2008 Alaska enacted its safe surrender law to ensure that surrendered infants receive immediate care for their safety and provide legal protection for the relinquishing parent, thereby reduce potential infant death due to illegal abandonment. Our current safe surrender law requires a parent to directly relinquish an infant to another individual.

Infant safety devices protect both relinquishing parents and infants. Infant safety devices allow a parent to surrender an infant anonymously through a climate-controlled device at a designated facility. Currently, twenty-two states authorize infant safety devices. House Bill 64 would authorize the use of infant safety devices as an additional method of infant relinquishment under the safe surrender laws. These devices would safely hold an infant with an automatic lock and constant video surveillance while immediately alerting appropriate personnel of the surrender. Infant safety devices would be placed in conspicuous areas with appropriate signage as determined by the Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS). An infant safety device may be located at hospital, emergency department, freestanding birth center, office of a private physician, rural health clinic, municipal police department, state trooper post, fire department, or other facility designated by the DFCS commissioner.

The ability to relinquish an infant to a safe location rather than an individual allows additional anonymity for the relinquishing parent while still ensuring that surrendered infants receive immediate medical care.

HOUSE BILL NO. 64

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES TOMASZEWSKI, Johnson, Schwanke, Prax

Introduced: 1/24/25

Referred: Health and Social Services, Judiciary

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to the surrender of infants; and providing for an effective date."**

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 * **Section 1.** AS 47.10.013(c) is amended to read:

4 (c) A parent who is immune from prosecution under AS 11.81.500 and
5 chooses to surrender an infant shall surrender the infant in the manner described in this
6 subsection. Surrendering the infant in the manner described in this subsection
7 constitutes abandonment for purposes of this chapter. An infant's parent is considered
8 to have abandoned the infant safely, and, notwithstanding AS 25.20.030 and
9 AS 47.10.120, the parent's legal duty to support the infant is extinguished if

10 (1) the parent, without expressing an intent to return for the infant,
11 leaves the infant

12 (A) in the physical custody of a person who

13 (i) [IS A (A) PERSON] the parent reasonably believes
14 would provide for the health and safety of the infant and who would act
15 appropriately to care for the infant;

1 **(ii) is a** [(B)] peace officer, community health aide,
2 physician, or hospital employee; or

3 **(iii) [(C) PERSON WHO]** is employed by or is a
4 volunteer for a fire department or emergency medical service, if the
5 person is acting within the scope of the person's fire department or
6 emergency medical service duties; **or**

7 **(B) in an infant safety device that**

8 **(i) is physically affixed to an exterior wall or located**
9 **inside of a hospital, emergency department, freestanding birth**
10 **center as defined in AS 47.32.900, office of a private physician**
11 **whether in individual or group practice, rural health clinic as**
12 **defined in AS 47.32.900, municipal police department, state trooper**
13 **post, fire department, or other facility designated by the**
14 **commissioner as an appropriate location for an infant safety device**
15 **under regulations adopted by the commissioner; and**

16 **(ii) meets the requirements of (h) of this section;** and

17 (2) there is no evidence the infant has been physically injured before
18 abandonment.

19 * **Sec. 2.** AS 47.10.013(d) is amended to read:

20 (d) A person to whom an infant is surrendered in the manner described in
21 **(c)(1)(A)(ii) or (iii)** [(c)(1)(B) OR (C)] of this section shall

22 (1) act appropriately to care for the infant;

23 (2) inform the parent that the parent may, but is not required to, answer
24 any questions regarding the name, identity, and medical history of the infant and
25 parents of the infant unless the parent chooses to contact the department under (3) of
26 this subsection;

27 (3) ask the parent if the parent wishes to relinquish the parent's
28 parental rights and release the infant for adoption; if the answer is affirmative, the
29 person shall contact the department so that the parent can discuss that option with the
30 department;

31 (4) immediately notify the nearest office of the department that the

1 infant has been surrendered in the manner described in (c)(1)(A)(ii) or (iii) [(c)] of this
2 section.

3 * **Sec. 3.** AS 47.10.013(e) is amended to read:

4 (e) An individual, agency, **designated** facility, or entity that receives an infant
5 abandoned safely under (c) of this section is not liable for civil damages for failure to
6 discharge the duties listed in (d) of this section.

7 * **Sec. 4.** AS 47.10.013 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

8 (g) A designated facility that receives an infant surrendered under (c)(1)(B) of
9 this section shall immediately notify the nearest office of the department that the infant
10 has been surrendered under (c)(1)(B) of this section.

11 (h) An infant safety device must be

12 (1) located in an area that is conspicuous and visible to employees of a
13 designated facility;

14 (2) climate-controlled;

15 (3) clearly marked with appropriate signage, as determined by the
16 department; and

17 (4) equipped with

18 (A) a system that automatically transmits a request to the 911
19 emergency system for the immediate dispatch of an emergency medical
20 services provider to the location of the infant safety device when the infant
21 safety device is opened;

22 (B) a video surveillance system that allows employees of the
23 designated facility to monitor the interior of the infant safety device 24 hours a
24 day; and

25 (C) an automated lock that secures the infant inside the infant
26 safety device after deposit.

27 (i) The department may provide training to emergency medical service
28 providers, 911 operators, hospital staff, firefighters, law enforcement officers, and
29 employees of a designated facility in how to implement and comply with the
30 requirements for the surrender of an infant as described in this section.

31 (j) In this section, "designated facility" means a facility described in

1 (c)(1)(B)(i) of this section that has an infant safety device located at the facility.

2 * **Sec. 5.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2026.

34th Alaska State Legislature

State Capitol, Room 405
Juneau, AK 99801
(907)465-4457



1292 Sadler Way, Suite 308
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 451 -8172

Representative Frank Tomaszewski

House Bill 64: Surrender of Infants; Inf. Safety Device v.A

Sectional Analysis

Section 1

Amends the child abandonment statute (AS 47.10.013(c)) to make a parent immune from prosecution if they safely leave the infant in a safety device that is fiscally affixed to allowable public agency facility.

Section 2

Amends the child abandonment statute (AS 47.10.013(d)) to conform to Section 1 abandonment for the person to whom an infant is safely surrendered.

Section 3

Amends the child abandonment statute (AS47.10.013(e)) to include designated facility as a receiver of a safely abandoned infant.

Section 4

Adds a new subsection to the child abandonment statute to require receiving facilities to immediately notify the nearest peace officer, community health aide, physician, or hospital employee.

Adds a new subsection to specify what an infant safety device must be equipped with and where it must be located.

Section 5

Provides an effective date of July 1, 2026.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2025 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 64
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HB064-DOH-HFLC-03-06-25
Title: SURRENDER OF INFANTS; INF. SAFETY
DEVICE
Sponsor: TOMASZEWSKI
Requester: (H)HSS

Department: Department of Health
Appropriation: Health Care Services
Allocation: Health Facilities Licensing and Certification
OMB Component Number: 2944

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2026 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2026 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2025) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2026) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*

Does the bill create or modify a new fund or account? No
(Supplemental/Capital/New Fund - discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? Yes
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed? 07/01/26

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version/comments:

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared By: <u>Lynne Keilman-Cruz, Acting Director</u>	Phone: <u>(907)602-0049</u>
Division: <u>Health Care Services</u>	Date: <u>03/06/2025</u>
Approved By: <u>Pam Halloran, Assistant Commissioner</u>	Date: <u>03/06/25</u>
Agency: <u>Department of Health</u>	

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB064

Analysis

This legislation provides for immunity from prosecution for a parent who abandons an infant to an infant safety device and identifies requirements for facility where the infant safety device is located, i.e., the designated facility, and for the receiving staff member of the designated facility.

This legislation will require Health Care Services, specifically, the Health Facilities Licensing and Certification component, to develop regulations for facilities that elect to serve as a surrender location; oversee compliance of facilities that elect to serve as a surrender location; and implement changes to survey procedures and requirements to ensure that facilities train staff, have a response plan, and maintain the infant safety device in accordance with manufacturer standards.

These facilities are already inspected; this addition to surveys and the associated regulations costs can be absorbed.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2025 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 64
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HB064-FCS-CSM-3-7-25
Title: SURRENDER OF INFANTS; INF. SAFETY
DEVICE
Sponsor: TOMASZEWSKI
Requester: (H)Health and Social Services

Department: Department of Family and Community Services
Appropriation: Children's Services
Allocation: Children's Services Management
OMB Component Number: 3321

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2026	Included in	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
	Appropriation Requested	Governor's FY2026 Request	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2025) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2026) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*

Does the bill create or modify a new fund or account? N/A
(Supplemental/Capital/New Fund - discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed? N/A

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version/comments:

Initial Version.

Prepared By: <u>Raymie Matiashowski, Legislative Liaison</u>	Phone: <u>(907)419-2639</u>
Division: <u>Commissioner's Office</u>	Date: <u>03/07/2025 01:00 PM</u>
Approved By: <u>Marian Sweet, Assistant Commissioner</u>	Date: <u>03/07/2025</u>
Agency: <u>Department of Family and Community Services</u>	

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 64

Analysis

HB 64 amends Children in Need of Aid (CINA) statute 47.10.013(c) (Abandonment - Safe Surrender) by adding a method which an infant may be safely surrendered. The amendment adds, outside of a physical person, an infant safety device, defines the department's authority to implement and train those who employ the use of a box, and defines a designated facility.

However the funding source for the safe surrender is unclear as described in this legislation.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2025 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 64
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HB064-DPS-AST-3-7-2025
Title: SURRENDER OF INFANTS; INF. SAFETY
DEVICE
Sponsor: TOMASZEWSKI
Requester: Health and Social Services, Judiciary

Department: Department of Public Safety
Appropriation: Alaska State Troopers
Allocation: Alaska State Trooper Detachments
OMB Component Number: 2325

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2026 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2026 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants & Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None								
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

Change in Revenues

None								
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2025) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2026) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*

Does the bill create or modify a new fund or account? No
(Supplemental/Capital/New Fund - discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed? n/a

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version/comments:

N/A - initial Fiscal Note

Prepared By: <u>Deputy Commissioner Leon Morgan</u>	Phone: <u>(907)223-1358</u>
Division: <u>Commissioner's Office</u>	Date: <u>03/07/2025 11:30 AM</u>
Approved By: <u>Dianna Thornton, Administrative Services Director</u>	Date: <u>03/07/25</u>
Agency: <u>Department of Public Safety</u>	

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 64

Analysis

This bill amends AS 47.10.013 to authorize the Department of Health (DOH) to establish regulations allowing for the placement of infant safety devices at designated locations, including state trooper posts. While the bill does not mandate installation, if DOH adopts regulations requiring compliance, there could be a significant financial impact on the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Fiscal Impact Considerations for DPS:

Capital and Installation Costs:

If regulations require compliance, DPS may need to install infant safety devices at 40+ AST and AWT posts statewide. Each device is estimated to cost approximately \$16.0, excluding installation, HVAC modifications, and security system integration. Installation costs would vary based on location, climate, and facility infrastructure, particularly in remote areas where additional construction and environmental controls may be required.

Leased facilities may require landlord approvals or additional agreements for modifications.

Information Technology (IT) and Security Infrastructure:

Devices would require 24/7 surveillance, secure network connections, and automated alert systems integrated with emergency dispatch services. Some remote posts may lack adequate IT infrastructure, requiring additional investment in networking, security cameras, and system maintenance. Coordination within DPS with IT contractors may be necessary to implement and maintain the system.

Ongoing Maintenance and Operational Costs:

Regular system testing, maintenance contracts, and personnel training would be necessary to ensure the devices remain operational. Additional HVAC maintenance could be required in extreme climate locations where temperature control is a factor. Facilities without existing ADA-compliant access may require modifications.

Personnel and Response Readiness:

If DOH regulations require a Trooper response upon device activation, staffing requirements at rural locations may need evaluation. DPS may need to explore alternative response agreements, such as partnerships with local EMS or healthcare facilities, to ensure compliance with potential mandates.

Conclusion:

While this bill does not impose an immediate fiscal impact on DPS, future costs could arise if DOH establishes regulations requiring compliance. Should such regulations be adopted, DPS would need additional resources for installation, infrastructure upgrades, maintenance, and potential personnel considerations to ensure proper implementation.

Anchorage police are still searching for the mother of an infant found dead last week.

By Chris Klint

Published November 6, 2024 at 12:58 PM AKST

Anchorage police are still trying to find the mother of an infant found dead outdoors downtown last week, emphasizing officers' care about her condition.

"We're concerned about her well-being at this point in time," Anchorage Police Department Capt. Amanda Fisher said.

According to a police statement, officers received reports shortly before 8 a.m. Friday about an infant found dead outside on the 200 block of Cordova Street. Fisher, the department's chief of detectives, said in a Tuesday interview that the discovery severely affected the people who reported it.

"It was first reported by a passerby who found the infant and was very upset by that," Fisher said. "So she started screaming, which caught the attention of another individual who was nearby who then came and placed the 911 call for her."

Fisher said the infant's body was taken to the state medical examiner's office. She declined to answer questions about what happened, including where exactly the baby was found and what condition the baby was in, citing pending results from the examination. Police currently classify their response to Cordova Street as a death investigation rather than a homicide investigation, Fisher said. In the meantime, officers are asking for public help in contacting the child's mother, who they say might have recently given birth.

"We don't know how the situation came to be and how she and the baby came to be in the situations that they were," Fisher said. "So it's very important that if anybody does have information that can help us to find her. We would love to be able to reach out to her, get in touch with her, see how she's doing, both medically, emotionally – all those things that go with that."

Fisher said Friday's infant death is the first such case the city has seen since 2013, when police said a newborn girl wrapped in a towel was found dead at Eagle River's Turner Park. The mother, then-Army Spc. Ashley Ard, was charged with second-degree murder.

The Anchorage Daily News reported that Ard later pleaded guilty to manslaughter charges. At her 2018 sentencing to nine years in her daughter's death, according to Alaska's News Source, Ard told the court, "I think about her every single day."

Fisher said Anchorage has resources for mothers who need to give up newborns. The state Safe Surrender of Infants Act allows people to surrender infants less than 21 days old to peace officers, firefighters and doctors among others.

"Something so simple as calling 911 and having police respond, or taking them to the place like a hospital, something along those lines, those are all different options that someone in a situation finding themselves distressed might be able to utilize," she said.

Anchorage Fire Department spokeswoman Lexi Trainer said Tuesday that local fire stations don't have heated "safe surrender" boxes for infants, but staff have been hoping to add them ever since the Ard case.

"We have been at a standstill for two years in the process," Trainer said in an email. "We're hoping this incident helps us finally get some."

Police are asking anyone with information about Friday's incident, as well as surveillance video from the area, to call 311.

Table 1. State Comparison of Infant Safety Device Requirements

States with infant safety devices	Requirements of Infant Safety Devices						
	Climate Controlled Device	Installed in conspicuous location	Physically affixed to wall, anchored support frame	Automatic Lock	Equipped with alarm system	24 Hour camera surveillance	Signage clearly identifies device
Alaska - SB 9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alabama	X	X	X	X	X	*	X
Arkansas		X	X		*		
Idaho			X				
Indiana		X			*	X	
Iowa	X	X			*		
Kansas	X	X	X	X	X		
Kentucky		X			X		
Louisiana	X		X	X			X
Maine		X			X		
Maryland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mississippi	X	X	X		X		
Missouri	X						
Montana	X	X	X		X		
New Hampshire		X			X		
Ohio	X			X	X		X
Oklahoma		X			X		
Pennsylvania	X			X	X		X
Tennessee		X			X		
Texas		X			X		
Virginia	X	X		X	X		X
West Virginia		X			X		
Wisconsin	X	X	X		X	X	
*	Certain exemptions and additional requirements apply to infant safety devices and designated providers. It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list of all state requirements.						
Table prepared by Senator Myers office.							



How the Safe Surrender of Infants Act affects you

Who Is Affected

The following people may be called upon to accept a surrendered infant:

- Peace officers
- Firefighters
- Emergency medical services providers
- Other medically trained individuals including doctors, nurses, or health aides
- Any person the parent reasonably believes would keep the infant safe and provide appropriate care

Who Can Be Surrendered

For the purposes of the Safe Surrender Act, an infant is defined as being less than 21 days old.

What You Must Do

When receiving a surrendered infant, you must:

- Care for the infant
- Advise the parent that they may, but are not required to, provide the infant and/or parents' name(s) and medical history
- Ask the parent if they wish to give up parental rights and release the infant for adoption
 - If the parent answers "yes", you must assist the parent in contacting the Office of Children's Services (OCS)
 - If the patient answers "no", you must immediately notify OCS
 - Physical locations, phone numbers, and fax numbers for OCS offices may be found on the internet at <http://hss.state.ak.us/ocs/Offices/local.htm>
 - The statewide toll free reporting number for child abuse or surrendered infants is (800) 478-4444

Caring for the Infant

If the infant is in need of immediate medical attention, provide care or request emergency medical services. If there is any doubt about the health of the infant, arrange for the infant to be transported to the nearest clinic or hospital by emergency medical services personnel in an infant car seat unless medical procedures prohibit placement of the infant in a proper restraint device.

If a delay is expected in the arrival of an OCS representative, the infant should be thoroughly assessed by a certified or licensed health care provider as soon as possible. All findings of the assessment should be documented.

If possible, ask if the baby is being breastfed or is on a special formula.

If you do not have a clinic or hospital in your community, you should have some basic supplies on hand to care for an infant or know where in your community you can quickly acquire them any time of day. Basic supplies to consider include:

- Infant car seat
- Baby formula
- Soft, warm blankets
- Bulb syringe
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Pacifiers
- Socks
- Hat

Supplies should be new or sanitized and of appropriate size for a newborn.

Confidentiality

Any information or documents regarding the surrender of an infant are confidential and may not be released to the public.

Voluntary Background Information Form for a Surrendered Infant

Providing this information is not required, but is extremely helpful in caring for the infant you are surrendering. Any information provided is completely confidential.

Preference for child's name		Date of Birth	
Where was the child born?			Sex
Father's Name		Mother's Name	
Race	Tribal Affiliation (if applicable)	Race	Tribal Affiliation (if applicable)
Contact Phone Number		Contact Phone Number	

Family Medical History

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Sickle Cell Disease			Sickle Cell Disease		
Heart Disease			Heart Disease		
Diabetes			Diabetes		
Cancer			Cancer		
If Yes, type:			If Yes, type:		
HIV			HIV		
Hepatitis			Hepatitis		
Mental Illness			Mental Illness		
Drug or alcohol use			Drug or alcohol use		
			If Yes, use during pregnancy?		
Surgical History			Surgical History		

Date Surrendered	Time Surrendered
Surrender Location	Person Accepting Infant
Contact Phone	Contact email



Mayor
Suzanne LaFrance

Anchorage Fire Department



Fire Chief
Douglas Schrage

The Honorable Senator Robert Myers
State Capitol Room 7
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Representative Frank Tomaszewski
State Capitol Room 405
Juneau, AK 99801

January 31, 2025

Dear Senator Myers and Representative Tomaszewski,

I am writing to lend my support for legislation that expands Alaska's "Safe Haven Law," AS 47.10.013, to provide immunity from prosecution for abandonment to a parent who safely surrenders a newborn infant to an infant safety device designed for that purpose. We are fortunate to have a Safe Haven law that provides immunity to a parent who surrenders a newborn to a firefighter, law enforcement officer or certain health care workers under conditions specified in the Statute. Experience shows that such face-to-face interaction can be a deterrent to a new parent who might be unable to hand over their child directly to one of these professionals.

There have been recent incidents where parents of newborns abandoned their infants even though the Safe Haven Law would have allowed surrender to a firefighter or police officer without fear of prosecution. As recently as November 2024, a newborn infant was found abandoned just one block away from Anchorage Fire Station 1 downtown. In January 2022, a baby was left in a bassinet at a well-travelled intersection in Fairbanks.

Fire departments around the country are equipping their fire stations with safe-surrender baby boxes which are secure, monitored, and environmentally protected vaults in which a parent can safely surrender their newborn infant. These boxes are an alternative for those that might not be up to directly giving up their child to a live person. Once the infant is placed in the box, the fire personnel inside the station and their 911 center are notified with a special alarm after allowing the parent a short amount of time to get away undetected.



Mayor
Suzanne LaFrance

Anchorage Fire Department



Fire Chief
Douglas Schrage

The current Statutes do not provide immunity from prosecution for abandonment in the case of a safe surrender box being used. Thank you for sponsoring legislation to provide the same immunity as if the baby were surrendered to an on-duty firefighter.

I will make myself and my colleagues available for invited testimony if it would be of service to you and the public process. Please let me know if I can provide any addition information.

Respectfully,

Douglas Schrage

Senator Robert Myers
State Capitol Room 7
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative Frank Tomaszewski
State Capitol Room 405
Juneau, AK 99801

February 4, 2025

Dear Senator Myers and Representative Tomaszewski,

I am writing you as a constituent, South Anchorage community member, Anchorage Fire Department Telecommunicator and public servant, to lend my support for SB9 and HB64 to expand the Safe Haven Law to allow for safe surrender in an infant safety device. As a nearly 18-year 911 dispatcher, I have personally experienced the trauma of answering a call for an abandoned infant found deceased in an Eagle River Park. I don't wish that trauma on any other First Responders, unsuspecting bystander that finds the infant, or parent who felt like they had no other choice.

Although our current Safe Haven Law allows for safe surrender and confidentiality, it does not fulfill the need for anonymity. The most recent abandoned infant, found November 1, 2024, was located only 1 block from a fire station in downtown Anchorage. On January 1, 2022, an infant was found in a cardboard box in negative 12-degree temperatures in Fairbanks. In September 1986 an infant was abandoned in a cardboard box outside a thrift shop on Muldoon Road in Anchorage.

Allowing infant safety devices would provide a safe and anonymous surrender option. Infant safety devices are voluntary and do not require funding by the local, state or federal government. Funding is often generated through individual donors and/or charitable organizations who support infant safety devices in the community. The devices are secure, monitored and have a temperature-controlled environment.

As of writing this letter, 19 states allow for safe surrender in an infant safety device and 12 other states are currently reviewing the legislation considering the update. As a lifelong Alaskan, I would be incredibly proud to add Alaska to the list of states that allow for safe surrender in an infant safety device.

I wholeheartedly support SB9 and HB64 and am willing to provide testimony if you find that beneficial. Thank you for sponsoring these bills.

Respectfully,

Frances Robinson
907-360-2535