

# Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Hospitals, Law Enforcement Agencies to Use Stickers to Identify Them as Safe Haven Locations**



Law enforcement agencies and hospitals across Arkansas received window stickers that identify them as Safe Haven drop-off locations.

Hospitals and law enforcement offices across Arkansas now have new stickers in their windows designating them as drop off locations for babies covered by the Arkansas's Safe Haven law.

The Arkansas Safe Haven law, passed in 2001, allows a parent to drop off a baby 30 days old or younger to an employee at any law enforcement agency or hospital emergency room with no questions asked. The parent(s) can remain anonymous.

While most people can't imagine giving up a baby, a parent may be in emotional or financial distress or have other reasons that they feel they cannot care for his/her child. The Safe Haven law was passed to protect these infants from being left in unsafe locations where they could be in danger, or even die. Once dropped off, the health of a baby is checked and the baby is turned over to the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), which will place the child in foster care and ultimately up for adoption.

State Senator Cecile Bledsoe, R-Rogers, worked to obtain special funding in State Fiscal Year 2014 for the Department to do, for the first time, an education and awareness campaign about this important protection for infants.

"It's one thing to pass a law, but we have to let people know about it," said Bledsoe. "It is my hope that a mother who realizes she can't care for her baby will hear about this law and safely surrender the infant rather than put the baby in harm's way."

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The Department developed a website, window stickers, posters, an educational video and a toolkit that explains the law and has been sent to more than 300 law enforcement agencies and hospitals across the state.

DCFS Director Cecile Blucker said the law gives parents a safe way to do the best thing for their baby when they feel they can't keep it.

"Every child is precious and when parents can't care for an infant, we want everyone to know that there is a safe, legal and anonymous way to make sure that newborn is loved and cared for."

If you are interested in learning more about the Safe Haven law or have questions, visit [www.arkansassafehaven.org](http://www.arkansassafehaven.org).