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Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Designating September as "Safe Haven Awareness Month"

09/30/2020

TRENTON – Today, Governor Phil Murphy signed SJR92, which designates September of each year as “Safe Haven Awareness Month” in New Jersey.

“Safe haven sites are designated in communities across this state so that new moms and dads can surrender their babies safely and anonymously,” **said Governor Murphy**. “I am proud to sign this legislation to bring awareness to the Safe Haven Act and thank my legislative partners and the Department of Children and Families for their work on this critical issue.”

“Many thanks to the Legislature and Governor Murphy for recognizing the importance of NJ’s Safe Haven Law by formally designating September as Safe Haven Awareness Month,” **said DCF Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer**. “Twenty years ago, our state began a journey to save infant lives from injury or harm resulting from young parents’ fear and panic. To date, 77 babies have been safely surrendered and adopted into loving families. These success stories are made possible only through awareness. We need to ensure that information about the Safe Haven Law continues to reach those who most need it, before they need it. For more information about Safe Haven, go to www.njsafehaven.org (<https://nj.gov/njsafehaven/>).”

SJR92 will bring awareness of the Safe Haven Infant Protection Act, which allows an individual to surrender an unwanted infant without fear of arrest or prosecution. The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) ensures that an infant is placed in a foster or adoptive loving home.

“We’ve all read the tragic news stories of unprepared parents abandoning their newborn in dangerous and sometimes deadly manners,” **said Senator Kristin Corrado**. “New Jersey has laws in place that allow the safe, legal, and anonymous drop-off of infants at hospital emergency rooms, police, fire, or EMS stations staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The more people we can make aware of this life-saving program, the more babies will be rescued.”

Joint statement from Assemblymembers Herb Conaway and Carol Murphy:

“As one of the first states to enact a Safe Haven Law back in 2000, New Jersey took an important step in preventing babies from tragically and needlessly losing their lives as a result of abandonment. Sometimes a new parent is overwhelmed by the responsibilities of caring for an infant in the midst of dealing with their own distressing life challenges. In those instances, parents in crisis need a safe place where they can surrender their baby and know the child will be well-taken care of by professionals. This law has already saved 77 babies in New Jersey since its enactment and could save even more if there was greater public awareness. Not everyone knows that an infant can legally be surrendered at a Safe Haven site or how to find one of those sites, and might otherwise choose to abandon their baby somewhere dangerous, which is why it’s so important to spread the word.”

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"For more than a decade, the New Jersey Safe Haven Infant Protection Act has saved dozens of precious newborn babies and brought a measure of comfort and peace to struggling and anxious parents," **said Assemblyman Jay Webber**. "I am pleased that the State continues to raise awareness of this important law and applaud Governor Murphy for signing this measure into law today."

Governor Phil Murphy

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