

"Our little Valentine" - the Safe Havens Act for Newborns



"It was the sweetest thing. He was our little Valentine. And my birthday was the day after, so it was just this sweet little gift," stated Kelly after she and her family welcomed in a little boy placed via the Safe Havens Act - on Valentine's Day!

Passed in 2000, the law allows a parent, who does not believe they can care for their newborn, to voluntarily give up custody of an infant age 30 days or younger to the staff of an emergency room and remain anonymous. DCF will then place the baby in a pre-approved adoptive home.

It offers birth parents in distress an alternative solution to one that may be unsafe or harmful to their infant child.

How effective has the law been?

Since 2001, a total of 57 babies have been brought to hospitals around Connecticut through the Safe Havens Act. "We are asking everyone – our media partners, hospital personnel, and all community members – to help spread the word that this alternative exists, and it saves lives," Commissioner Jodi Hill-Lilly stated.



"We know it takes a lot of courage for a parent who is struggling to seek help" she further added. "If you are a parent of a newborn and feel like you have nowhere to turn, please know that Safe Havens allows you to seek that help without any stigma attached. No Blame, No Shame and No Questions Asked."



What is Kelly's message for parents of newborns who feel they can no longer care safely for their baby and may consider utilizing the Safe Havens Act?

"I would want them to know that they don't have to go through it by themselves. There are families that want to step up and take in a baby and provide the care they themselves aren't able to give for whatever reason," she replied.

Kelly doesn't know her son's parents because biological parents using the Safe Haven Act can remain anonymous which is a large part of why the law is effective.

"I don't know our son's mom's story, but I know she made a really loving choice to give him up if she didn't feel she was to take care of him at that time. But there are loving homes that do want to support them in that way," Kelly stated.



Kelly said fostering definitely comes with some challenges and sacrifices but it's more than worth it. "I have seen my own girls grow so much in the process and I think it's been the best parenting decision that we've ever made," she said.

Each year, DCF educates the public on an ongoing basis about the existence of the Safe Haven law because every year there emerges a new group of parents who may not have been exposed to earlier messages about the law.



Here is how Connecticut's Safe Havens Act works:

- The law enables a parent to bring an infant 30 days or younger to a hospital emergency room and avoid prosecution for abandonment.
- The law states that parents who do not harm their newborn cannot be criminally charged if they bring their baby to a safe place.
- A nurse will ask the parent for their name and for medical information on the infant and parent. The parent does not have to provide that information.
- DCF will obtain custody and place the baby with a family who is already licensed and intends to adopt the baby. In one instance, a Safe Haven baby was placed into a permanent home of a relative.
- DCF will provide support to the baby's new family while terminating the biological parent's parental rights so that the adoption can become final.
- Connecticut law requires that a child can only be placed by DCF with a person licensed to provide foster or adoptive care.

Interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent? Please contact 1-888-KID-HERO and visit [CT Fosters: Foster Care & Adoption Services](#).

Learn more about Connecticut's [Safe Havens Act for Newborns](#).