



For Immediate Release
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Newborn Placed in Dumpster Prompts Agency to Remind Public of Safe Arms for Babies Act

WILMINGTON – In response to news reports about an alleged still born infant being disposed of in a dumpster, the Delaware Children’s Department is urging the public to be mindful of the Safe Arms for Babies law.

The law, which allows any parent to go to any Delaware hospital emergency department and leave their newborn (14 days old or younger) with any emergency department staff or volunteer, provides immunity from criminal prosecution provided the baby is alive, unharmed and brought into a hospital emergency department.

“The Safe Arms for Babies law protects our youngest, most vulnerable citizens,” said Vivian Rapposelli, Secretary of the Delaware Children’s Department. “While the tragedy that occurred seems, to many of us, unconscionable, it serves as a grim reminder that parents must be kept aware of their options to make certain every child in Delaware remains safe and healthy.”

According to the law, the person surrendering the baby will not be asked for identification, will not be asked who they are, will not have their identity revealed and will not be contacted. The employee or volunteer of the hospital will make a reasonable attempt to provide the person surrendering the baby with the identification number of the baby, a mail-back medical questionnaire and information about the Safe Arms for Babies law that includes a list of phone numbers for public and private agencies that provide counseling and adoption services.

Since the law was enacted in 2001, no child has been surrendered under the provisions.

“Child safety is the top priority of our Department,” said Rapposelli. “By reminding the public of the Safe Arms for Babies act, we are taking a preventative action step to ensure we stay true to our mission.”

On any given day, the Delaware Children’s Department provides services to children who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, dependent, or have mental health or substance abuse problems, and/or have been adjudicated delinquent by the Courts. For more information, please visit <http://www.kids.delaware.gov> or www.thinkofthechildfirst.com.

Our Mission: The Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth & Their Families assists children, youth and families in making positive changes through programs that support child and public safety, behavioral health and individual, family and community well-being.

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