

**Testimony in support  
LD 560: An Act To Amend Safe Haven Laws  
March 17, 2021**

Senator Carney, Representative Harnett, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Karen Vachon and I am the Executive Director of Maine Right To Life, located in Auburn. I come before you today in support of LD 560: An Act To Amend Safe Haven Laws, and I thank Representative Corey for sponsoring this bill.

Maine Right to Life is a state affiliate of the National Right To Life Committee. We are a non-profit organization founded to protect and uphold the dignity and worth of every human life from conception to natural death by making abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia socially, ethically, and legally unacceptable and to actively promote positive alternatives.

Imagine the fear a young passive small town gal may feel: She misses her period. Could it be – she’s pregnant? Living in a rural community, isolated from friends, feeling confused – the feelings include denial, anxiety, and fear. To tell, or not to tell? She casts the changes happening in her body aside – and does nothing, denial has set in. She hopes it will go away. Suddenly she finds herself in labor, delivering a baby alone. She doesn’t want anyone to know; she just wants the whole ordeal to go away. She doesn’t want to hurt her baby – she wants her baby to go to a good home, without anyone knowing she ever had this baby. What she does next could affect her emotional, mental, and physical well-being for the rest of her life.

Under current Maine law, childhood abandonment is illegal. This bill would simply amend the safe haven law, decriminalizing the act, if the baby is passed into safe hands within the first few days of life.

Baby boxes are not new! The concept is ancient, however a new crop of baby boxes started making a come-back in the US 2016. In the past 20 years, countries such as Pakistan, Malaysia, Germany and Switzerland have revived and modernized the baby box. In medieval times, cylindrical barrels were on the side of hospital, churches, and orphanages were safe havens for unwanted babies; today, the non-profit organization, Safe Haven Baby Boxes, provides the boxes to local charities.

Passage of this bill would permit Maine to offer Safe Haven Baby Boxes. Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania have passed laws permitting the boxes. A bill is in progress in New Jersey and efforts are materializing in Georgia.

I humbly ask this committee to pass this bill. Any young woman finding herself in this situation deserves a humane option. This bill has a happy ending for all: It saves the life of a new born, provides the legal anonymity to the young woman, and an opportunity for people looking to adopt. Thank you!

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