

## ***Safe Haven for Newborn Babies***

### ***Don't Abandon Your Newborn, Take Your Baby to a Safe Haven***

Alabama law provides an option for parents who do not wish to keep their newborn. An infant (child 45 days or younger) may be voluntarily handed over to an “emergency medical services provider” (defined as a licensed hospital which operates an emergency department; fire station provided that it is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year with at least one emergency medical services personnel) or a baby safety device by either parent, provided that the parent did not express an intent to return for the infant) by either parent. Upon taking possession of the infant, the hospital shall take the necessary steps to protect the physical health and safety of the infant. This includes, but is not limited to, immediate physical examination and evaluation followed by any treatment (s) deemed necessary.

The Safe Haven law provides an “incentive” to a parent who might otherwise “abandon” an infant into an inappropriate/life-threatening situation to hand over the infant to medical personnel without fear of abandonment charges.

The Act specifically excludes the following from the definition of an emergency medical service provider: “the offices, clinics, surgeries, or treatment facilities of private physicians or dentists.” Further, no licensed individual healthcare provider (physician, dentist, nurse, PA, or other healthcare professional) is deemed an emergency medical services provider.

For more information, call your local Department of Human Resources, Alabama District Attorneys Association, local District Attorney’s Office or contact a local hospital.