

HOUSE BILL NO. HB0056

Regan's safe haven for abandoned newborns.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Law and Senator(s) Larson

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to children; providing a safe haven for a
2 newborn child; providing for the termination of parental
3 rights; authorizing rulemaking; requiring reports; making
4 conforming amendments; and providing for an effective date.

5

6 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

7

8 **Section 1.** W.S. 14-11-101 through 14-11-109 are
9 created to read:

10

11

CHAPTER 11

12

SAFETY FOR A NEWBORN CHILD

13

14

14-11-101. Purpose and intent.

15

1 The purpose of this act is to provide to a parent of a
2 newborn child the means to relinquish the child so that the
3 child may be cared for and protected in a safe haven.

4

5 **14-11-102. Definitions.**

6

7 (a) As used in this act:

8

9 (i) "Abuse" means as defined by W.S.
10 14-3-202(a)(ii);

11

12 (ii) "Child protective agency" means as defined
13 by W.S. 14-3-202(a)(iv);

14

15 (iii) "Fire station" means a fire station that
16 is open and operating twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven
17 (7) days a week, and that is continually staffed with full-
18 time, paid firefighters who have emergency medical services
19 training;

20

21 (iv) "Hospital" means a general acute hospital
22 that is:

23

24 (A) Equipped with an emergency room;

1

2 (B) Open twenty-four (24) hours a day,
3 seven (7) days a week; and

4

5 (C) Employs full-time health care
6 professionals who have emergency medical services training.

7

8 (v) "Neglect" means as defined by W.S.
9 14-3-202(a)(vii);

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11 (vi) "Newborn child" means a child who is thirty
12 (30) days of age or younger as determined within a
13 reasonable degree of medical certainty;

14

15 (vii) "Safe haven provider" means any of the
16 following:

17

18 (A) A fire station;

19

20 (B) A hospital;

21

22 (C) A church or house of worship which
23 meets the requirements of rules and regulations promulgated

1 by the department of family services pursuant to W.S.
2 14-11-107; or

3

4 (D) Any other place of shelter and safety
5 identified by the department of family services which meets
6 the requirements of rules and regulations promulgated
7 pursuant to W.S. 14-11-107.

8

9 (viii) "This act" means W.S. 14-11-101 through
10 14-11-109.

11

12 **14-11-103. Relinquishment of a newborn child.**

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14 (a) A parent or a parent's designee may relinquish a
15 newborn child to a safe haven provider in accordance with
16 the provisions of this act and retain complete anonymity,
17 so long as the child has not been subject to actual or
18 suspected abuse or neglect.

19

20 (b) Relinquishment of a newborn child shall not, in
21 and of itself, constitute abuse or neglect and the child
22 shall not be considered an abused or neglected child, so
23 long as the relinquishment is carried out in substantial
24 compliance with provisions of this act.

1

2 (c) A safe haven provider shall accept a newborn
3 child who is relinquished pursuant to the provisions of
4 this act, and may presume that the person relinquishing is
5 the child's parent or parent's designee.

6

7 (d) The parent or parent's designee may provide
8 information regarding the parent and newborn child's
9 medical histories, and identifying information regarding
10 the nonrelinquishing parent of the child, but the safe
11 haven provider may not require that any information be
12 given unless there is actual or suspected abuse or neglect
13 of the child, or the person relinquishing expresses an
14 intent for return of the child.

15

16 (e) A safe haven provider may provide any necessary
17 emergency medical care to the newborn child and shall
18 deliver custody of the newborn child to the nearest
19 hospital as soon as possible.

20

21 (f) A hospital receiving a relinquished newborn child
22 may provide any necessary medical care to the child and
23 shall notify the local child protective agency as soon as

1 possible, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after
2 receiving the child.

3

4 (g) The local child protective agency shall assume
5 care and custody of the child immediately upon notice from
6 the hospital. After receiving custody, the local child
7 protective agency shall assist in placement of the newborn
8 child pursuant to W.S. 14-11-105(a).

9

10 **14-11-104. Newborn child identity.**

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12 Unless identifying information relating to the newborn
13 child has been provided, the department of family services
14 shall work with law enforcement agencies in an effort to
15 ensure that the newborn child has not been identified as a
16 missing child.

17

18 **14-11-105. Child placement; termination of parental**
19 **rights.**

20

21 (a) The department of family services shall
22 immediately place or contract for placement of the newborn
23 child in a potential adoptive home.

24

1 (b) If neither parent of the newborn child
2 affirmatively seeks the return of the child within three
3 (3) months after the date of delivery to a safe haven
4 provider, the department of family services shall file a
5 petition for the termination of the parent-child legal
6 relationship in accordance with W.S. 14-2-308 through
7 14-2-319.

8

9 (c) The department of family services shall conduct a
10 search of the putative father registry for unmarried
11 biological fathers and if the putative father is
12 identified, the petition shall be served pursuant to W.S.
13 14-2-313.

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15 **14-11-106. Safe relinquishment is an affirmative**
16 **defense.**

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18 If the person relinquishing a newborn child is the child's
19 parent or the parent's designee, and there is no actual or
20 suspected abuse or neglect, relinquishment of a newborn
21 child in substantial compliance with the provisions of this
22 act is an affirmative defense to any potential criminal
23 liability for abandonment or neglect relating to that
24 relinquishment.

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2 **14-11-107. Authority of department of family services**
3 **to promulgate rules and regulations.**

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5 The department of family services may promulgate rules and
6 regulations necessary for the effective implementation of
7 this act. The rules and regulations shall specify
8 conditions and qualifications for safe haven providers.

9

10 **14-11-108. Immunity from liability.**

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12 Any person, official, institution or agency participating
13 in good faith in any act required or permitted by this act
14 is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might
15 otherwise result by reason of the action. For the purpose
16 of any civil or criminal proceeding, the good faith of any
17 person, official, institution or agency participating in
18 any act permitted or required by W.S. 14-11-101 through
19 14-11-109 shall be presumed.

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21 **14-11-109. Reports of relinquishments.**

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23 Each local child protective agency shall maintain and
24 update on a monthly basis a report of the number of newborn

1 children who have been relinquished pursuant to this act
2 and shall submit the information to the department of
3 family services. The department of family services shall
4 submit an annual report to the joint labor, health and
5 social services interim committee beginning July 1, 2004,
6 and annually thereafter, that compiles the monthly reports
7 required by this section.

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9 **Section 2.** W.S. 14-2-309(a) by creating a new
10 paragraph (vii) and 14-3-202(a)(ii)(intro) are amended to
11 read:

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13 **14-2-309. Grounds for termination of parent-child**
14 **relationship; clear and convincing evidence.**

15

16 (a) The parent-child legal relationship may be
17 terminated if any one (1) or more of the following facts is
18 established by clear and convincing evidence:

19

20 (vii) The child was relinquished to a safe haven
21 provider in accordance with W.S. 14-11-101 through
22 14-11-109, and neither parent has affirmatively sought the
23 return of the child within three (3) months from the date
24 of relinquishment.

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14-3-202. Definitions.

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(a) As used in W.S. 14-3-201 through 14-3-215:

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(ii) "Abuse" means inflicting or causing physical or mental injury, harm or imminent danger to the

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physical or mental health or welfare of a child other than

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by accidental means, including abandonment, unless the

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abandonment is a relinquishment substantially in accordance

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with W.S. 14-11-101 through 14-11-109, excessive or

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unreasonable corporal punishment, malnutrition or

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substantial risk thereof by reason of intentional or

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unintentional neglect, and the commission or allowing the

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commission of a sexual offense against a child as defined

16

by law:

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Section 3. This act is effective July 1, 2003.

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(END)