

HCS HB 1437 -- ABANDONMENT OF NEWBORN CHILDREN

SPONSOR: Murphy

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 1.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1437.

This bill adds a newborn safety incubator, as defined in the bill, as a place a parent of a child up to 45 days old may voluntarily deliver the child with the intent not to return, without being prosecuted. Incubators must be within 50 feet of a police or fire station, or a medical facility that is staffed at all hours and have certain safety mechanisms and sanitation procedures. The bill authorizes the Department of Health and Senior Services to establish rules relating to the "Safe Place for Newborns Act of 2002".

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that in a state that protects all life, there is still a significant amount of shame in relinquishing an infant and this allows a way for scared mothers to give up babies, safely, without anyone knowing their identity or having to face another person. In other locations that have installed these "baby boxes" there have been no reports of dead abandoned infants.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Murphy.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.