

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 183

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 24, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblyman JAY WEBBER

District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Wirths, Space and Assemblywoman Pinkin

SYNOPSIS

Designates September of each year as “Safe Haven Awareness Month” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 9/21/2020)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating September of each year as “Safe
2 Haven Awareness Month” in New Jersey.

3

4 **WHEREAS**, Safe Haven laws have been enacted in several states across
5 the nation in order to prevent unsafe infant abandonments and
6 fatalities as reported in several high profile cases that generated
7 nationwide media attention; and

8 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey was one of the first five states to enact a Safe
9 Haven law for infants who are unable to be cared for, with the
10 enactment of the "New Jersey Safe Haven Infant Protection Act"
11 (Safe Haven law) in 2000; and

12 **WHEREAS**, The Safe Haven law allows a distressed parent or someone
13 on his or her behalf to safely, legally, and anonymously surrender
14 an unharmed infant to a staff member at one of New Jersey's legally
15 designated Safe Haven sites within 30 days of the child's birth; and

16 **WHEREAS**, Legally designated sites in New Jersey include hospital
17 emergency rooms, police and fire stations, and ambulance and first
18 aid squads; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Under the Safe Haven law, the Department of Children
20 and Families (DCF) ensures that an infant is placed in a foster or
21 pre-adoptive loving home; and

22 **WHEREAS**, The DCF is the State department tasked with promoting
23 the Safe Haven law in New Jersey in partnership with public and
24 private agencies, the Legislature, schools, community
25 organizations, and community leaders; and

26 **WHEREAS**, The DCF promotes the Safe Haven law through annual
27 public awareness campaigns, conferences, workshops, community
28 events, and the distribution of educational materials; and

29 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey schools will begin teaching high school
30 students about the Safe Haven law in the upcoming school year;
31 and

32 **WHEREAS**, Since the enactment of New Jersey's Safe Haven law in
33 2000, the law has successfully saved the lives of 77 infants in this
34 State; and

35 **WHEREAS**, On the 20th anniversary of the enactment of the Safe
36 Haven law, it is altogether fitting, proper, and in the public interest
37 for New Jersey to designate September as “Safe Haven Awareness
38 Month” in order to strengthen the State's efforts in raising
39 awareness and saving infant lives; now, therefore,

40

41 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
42 *State of New Jersey:*

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44 1. September of each year is designated as “Safe Haven
45 Awareness Month.”

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47 2. The Governor may annually issue a proclamation recognizing
48 September as “Safe Haven Awareness Month” and call upon public

1 officials and the residents of the State of New Jersey to observe the
2 month with appropriate activities and programs.

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4 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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9 This joint resolution designates September of each year as “Safe
10 Haven Awareness Month” in New Jersey.

11 Safe Haven laws have been enacted in several states across the
12 nation in order to prevent unsafe infant abandonments and fatalities
13 as reported in several high profile cases that generated nationwide
14 media attention.

15 New Jersey was one of the first five states to enact a Safe Haven
16 law for infants for infants who are unable to be cared for, with the
17 enactment of the "New Jersey Safe Haven Infant Protection Act"
18 (Safe Haven law) in 2000. The Safe Haven law allows a distressed
19 parent or someone on his or her behalf to safely, legally, and
20 anonymously surrender an unharmed infant to a staff member at one
21 of New Jersey's legally designated Safe Haven sites within 30 days
22 of the child's birth. Legally designated sites in New Jersey include
23 hospital emergency rooms, police and fire stations, and ambulance
24 and first aid squads.

25 Under the Safe Haven law, the Department of Children and
26 Families (DCF) ensures that an infant is placed in a foster or pre-
27 adoptive loving home. The DCF is the State department tasked
28 with promoting the Safe Haven law in New Jersey in partnership
29 with public and private agencies, the Legislature, schools,
30 community organizations, and community leaders. The DCF
31 promotes the Safe Haven law through annual public awareness
32 campaigns, conferences, workshops, community events, and the
33 distribution of educational materials. New Jersey schools will
34 begin teaching high school students about the Safe Haven law in the
35 upcoming school year.

36 Since the enactment of New Jersey's Safe Haven law in 2000,
37 the law has successfully saved the lives of 77 infants in this State.