



ELLEN SCHUTT

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 31ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Representative Schutt’s Safe Haven “Baby Box” Bill Signed Into Law

Madison, WI – On Wednesday, Representative Ellen Schutt’s (R-Clinton) Safe Haven Law reform bill (the baby box bill) was signed into law as 2023 Wisconsin Act 79.

“I am glad Wisconsin will now be able to provide parents in distress an option to complete anonymity when making the difficult choice to surrender their newborn,” Representative Schutt said.

Wisconsin's Safe Haven law has long served as a critical safety net for infants believed to be under 72 hours old, allowing parents to anonymously relinquish their child to designated authorities. However, a crucial aspect has been missing: a method of relinquishment without the face-to-face interaction.

Act 79 allows a municipality to install a newborn infant safety device at a hospital, fire station, or law enforcement agency building so a parent can relinquish their newborn with complete anonymity. The building where the baby box is located must be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Once a baby is placed in the designated box, an alarm is automatically triggered inside the building to alert them.

“Wisconsin’s 2001 Safe Haven Law carried a stigma, especially in small communities, because parents were afraid others will find out they gave up their children. Sadly, this came to a head earlier this year after a newborn was found dead in a field in Whitewater. Members of the community came to me expressing an interest in making sure this did not happen again, and I am glad we were able to find a solution and get this law enacted.

“With their potential to provide a safe and anonymous option, baby boxes will save lives,” said Representative Schutt.

This is Representative Schutt’s second bill to be signed into law since taking office in January.

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The 31st Assembly District includes the City of Elkhorn, portions of the Cities of Beloit, and Whitewater, the Villages of Clinton and Darien, the Towns of Bradford, Clinton, Johnstown, La Prairie, Turtle, Darien, Lafayette, La Grange, Richmond, Spring Prairie, Sugar Creek, and Whitewater, and portions of the Town of Beloit.