



**ARKANSAS
RIGHT TO LIFE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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**Statewide Safe Haven Baby Box Billboard Campaign Continues
as Conway Becomes 5th Arkansas Location; 75th in the Nation**

The fifth Safe Haven Baby Box in Arkansas – and 75th in the nation – is set to go live July 7 at Conway’s Central Fire Station #1, 1401 Caldwell St. with an unveiling event at 10:30 a.m.

The Safe Haven Baby Box is a device that allows parents to surrender their newborn infants that are less than 30 days old anonymously and safely near fire stations or other first responder stations. In addition to Arkansas, Safe Haven Baby Boxes are located in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Florida and Arizona.

Since June 2019 Arkansas Right to Life has promoted the Safe Haven Law and Safe Haven Baby Boxes through a billboard campaign beginning with the first billboard in Harrison. Billboards have been placed in 21 Arkansas counties with the goal of placing billboards in all of Arkansas’ 75 counties, said Rose Mimms, executive director of Arkansas Right to Life.

Two new billboards are set to go live in Fort Smith (Sebastian County) and El Dorado (Union County) beginning the end of July.

“As we anticipate the reverse of *Roe vs. Wade* and the need for life-affirming options for mothers unable to parent, Safe Haven Baby Boxes provide mothers a safe and anonymous surrender of their newborn for adoption into forever families,” said Mimms.

The first Safe Haven Baby Box in Arkansas was dedicated in September 2019 at Fire Station No. 3, 2717 Edison Ave., Benton, where the first newborn was surrendered at the location on May 24, 2020. Other Safe Haven Baby Box locations in Arkansas are located at Jonesboro Fire Station No. 3, 2212 Brazos St.; Springdale Fire Station No. 6, 1623 S. 48th St., and Rogers Fire Station No. 5, 2525 South Pinnacle Hills Parkway. Hospitals and law enforcement agencies also serve as surrender locations.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes also planned for Maumelle, Fort Smith, El Dorado, as well as a second location in Rogers.

Mimms said the Arkansas Right to Life Safe Haven billboard campaign is funded through donations, adding that the Knights of Columbus organization has been instrumental in providing sponsorship and funding for several billboard locations.

The Safe Haven Law, enacted in Arkansas in 2001, is designed to protect babies from being hurt or killed from abandonment by parents who are unwilling or unable to provide parenting. Under the law, a parent may surrender an infant 30 days or younger anonymously at a hospital emergency room or law enforcement agency, but in 2019 the law was amended to include manned fire stations as a surrender location. The amended law sponsored by Arkansas Sen. Cecile Bledsoe and Rep. Rebecca Petty also approved the installation of safety devices at surrender locations.

Mimms said the billboard campaign's purpose is threefold: 1) to educate the general public and parents about the Safe Haven Law, 2) to advise manned fire departments that they are now an official surrender location and 3) to promote the option of Safe Haven Baby Boxes for parents who want or need total anonymity in the safe surrender of their baby.

Every state has a Safe Haven Law, but provisions vary from state to state, said Mimms. The Arkansas Safe Haven Law allows a parent to bring a child 30 days old or younger to an official surrender location without facing prosecution of endangerment and abandonment of a child. The law does not prohibit prosecution for abuse or neglect of the child that occurred before the child was given up to a medical provider or law enforcement agency.

Once a baby is surrendered, the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is contacted immediately and the child is treated medically. DCFS will assume responsibility for the child and place the child with a "forever" family.

The DCFS maintains a website, public service announcements, and materials in both English and Spanish to help educate the public about the Arkansas Safe Haven Law.

"Arkansas Right to Life joins the effort with our support of the law to add manned fire departments and the installation of safety devices in Arkansas through our educational billboard campaign," said Mimms.

Organizations or individuals wishing to support the Safe Haven billboard campaign may visit artl.org/donate or mail a tax-deductible gift to Arkansas Right to Life Educational Trust Fund (note Billboard Campaign in check or online), Box 1697, Little Rock, AR 72203-1697.

For more information or questions about the campaign contact Mimms at (501) 663-4237 or email artl@artl.org.

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Arkansas Right to Life is the state affiliate of the National Right to Life Committee the oldest and largest pro-life organization. For more information visit <https://artl.org/>.