

February 1, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**February is Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness Month in Kern County**

(Bakersfield, CA) – On February 6, 2024, the Kern County Board of Supervisors will proclaim February, Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness Month in Kern County. Additionally, the Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) Coalition is holding a live Press Conference on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. at Kern County Fire Station #65 located at 10051 Meacham Road, Bakersfield, CA 93312.

Since 2006, there have been 98 babies safely surrendered in Kern County, including three in 2023.

The Safe Surrender Baby Law responds to the situation of newborn infant deaths due to abandonment in unsafe locations. First signed into law in January 2001, the Safely Surrender Baby Law became permanent in 2006. The law's intent is to save the lives of newborn infants at risk of abandonment by encouraging parents or persons with lawful custody to safely surrender the infant within 72 hours of birth, with no questions asked. The law exists so that these infants will not be harmed because the mother abandons them, or fails to provide them with care, potentially resulting in death of the child.

Available data for the state of California, indicates a generally decreasing trend of abandonments since enactment of the SSB Law in California, from 25 cases in 2002 to five or less cases per year since 2010, representing a decrease of at least 80%.

[www.cdss.ca.gov/safe-surrender-baby](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/safe-surrender-baby).

Throughout Kern County, a newborn baby (up to three days old) can be safely surrendered into the hands of any hospital emergency room or Fire Station personnel. The Safely Surrendered Baby Coalition, under the leadership of the Department of Human Services, works to educate all Kern County residents about this important law. For information on SSB locations throughout the county visit:

[www.kcdhs.org/ssb](http://www.kcdhs.org/ssb).

The SSB coalition is made up of a group of dedicated individuals representing a long list of agencies, non-profits and stakeholders including, First 5 Kern, Kern Family Health Care, Kern Medical Hospital, Clinica Sierra Vista, Koinonia Family Services, Kern County Public Health, Kern County Fire Department, Bakersfield City Fire Department, Adventist Health Hospitals, Dignity Health Mercy & Memorial Hospitals, Bakersfield Pregnancy Center, Kern County Right to Life, and Ridgecrest Regional Hospital.

We invite you to share this messaging throughout the community in an effort to educate individuals about this important option for any woman and baby in crisis.

Don't abandon your baby. Safely surrender your baby into the hands of any fire station or hospital emergency room personnel.  
No names. No blame. No shame.



For media arrangements, please contact Jana Slagle at 661.342.8054

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