



February 1, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
**February is Safely Surrendered Baby Awareness Month in Kern County**

(Bakersfield, CA) –The Safely Surrendered Baby Coalition is planning a series of awareness campaign through social media to bring attention to this important law in Kern County.

**84 babies have been safely surrendered in Kern County since we began tracking those babies in 2006, including eight in 2020.**

For most people, the birth of a child is a happy occasion celebrated with family and friends. But for some women, childbirth becomes a crisis - and the decisions made following an infant's birth can be a matter of life or death for the child. The Safely Surrendered 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 Surrendered Baby Law became permanent in January 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, sometimes leaving them to die.

Join us in celebrating the men and women who make this law possible by following along on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook @kerncountydhs for information and education about the Safely Surrendered Baby Law. We also invite the media to share this important story with the community.

Throughout Kern County, a newborn baby can be safely surrendered into the hands of any hospital emergency room or Fire Station staff. The Safely Surrendered Baby Coalition, under the coordination of the Department of Human Services, works to educate all Kern County residents about this important law. The coalition is made up of a small group of dedicated individuals representing a long list of agencies, non-profits, hospitals, and stakeholders, including First 5 Kern, Kern Family Health Care, Kern County Fire Department, Bakersfield City Fire Department, Adventist Health Hospitals – Bakersfield, Delano and Tehachapi, Dignity Health Mercy & Memorial Hospitals, Kern Medical, Bakersfield Pregnancy Center, and Ridgecrest Regional Hospital.

We hope that you can assist us again this year in our efforts to educate our community about this important option for any woman and her baby in a crisis.

**Don't abandon your baby. Safely surrender your baby into the hands of any fire station or emergency room personnel. It's safe, legal, and no one has to know.**

For media arrangements, please contact Jana Slagle at 661.342.8054.

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