

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6586

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As of February 4, 2016

**Title:** An act relating to requiring the department of social and health services to collect and publicly report information on the safe surrender of newborn children.

**Brief Description:** Requiring the department of social and health services to collect and publicly report information on the safe surrender of newborn children.

**Sponsors:** Senator Fain.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/04/16.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

**Staff:** Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

**Background:** In 2002, the Safety of Newborn Children Act was enacted offering a safe place to leave a newborn child, confidentially, and without fear of punishment. A parent within 72 hours of a child's birth can transfer the baby to a qualified person at a hospital, fire station, or federally designated rural health clinic, and do so anonymously without fear of criminal prosecution for abandoning, or failing to support, the child. Safe haven laws have been adopted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The National Safe Haven Alliance estimates that over 1000 infants have been saved over the past decade under safe haven laws.

Following the abandonment of a deceased newborn girl on the side of a road near a hospital in 2014, King County created the Safety of Newborn Children Task Force to examine ways to improve the implementation of the Safety of Newborn Children Act throughout King County. One of the Task Force's recommendations is to develop protocols with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for annually reviewing Children's Protective Services intake data on newborns relinquished under the Safety of Newborns Act.

**Summary of Bill:** DSHS must collect and compile information regarding: (1) the number and medical condition of newborns transferred under the Safety of Newborn Children Act; and (2) the number and medical condition of newborns abandoned within the state not transferred under the Safety of Newborn Children law.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

DSHS is to report its findings to the public annually, which may be by posting on its website, beginning July 31, 2016.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.