



NO VOTE ON HB2901 (BABY BOXES)

Dear Honorable Members of the Oregon Senate:

I am an attorney and a national legal expert on issues related to adopted people, the people who are ultimately created through the use of safe haven laws and so-called “baby boxes.” I ask that you and your colleagues VOTE NO on HB2901, a bill that attempts to authorize the installation of unregulated electrical baby box devices in Oregon.

First, I defer to the many maternal health organizations in the United States that do not want these boxes in their communities. I also defer to the opinion of state experts with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics, who have stated in part:

While the safe and legal surrendering of a newborn by a mother who does not want to retain custody is important, **there is no research or clinical evidence of the safety or appropriateness related to the [baby box] device described in the legislation. Before advancing the legal framework provided in this bill, there should be clear and uncontroverted clinical evidence supporting the use of these devices.**

Informational Letter of The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Maryland Section, and American Academy of Pediatrics, Maryland Chapter, February 29, 2024, submitted to the Maryland Judicial Proceedings Committee.

There is no evidence---none--- that baby boxes reduce illegal abandonment of infants. Rather, the installation of baby boxes, along with the savvy promotion of them by the sole company that builds, sells, installs, promotes, and refers people to use them---does one primary thing: *increases the abandonment of infants while diminishing any stated priorities for health and other supportive services for at risk communities.* **Ultimately, baby boxes encourage people to have unsafe births outside of a safe environment or facility, and at least two infants have died in boxes or were placed in a box while already dead.**

Oregon has reported few abandonments under its current safe haven law, and there is no evidence that baby boxes will address unlawful abandonments. Rather, a baby box represents a private commercially promoted solution to a problem that does not exist. If you believe that illegal infant abandonments are a growing problem in the state—which they are not—Oregon should rely on its current safe haven law as a partial solution. It should also, more significantly, invest more heavily in maternal and reproductive health, particularly community-based mental health services, crisis nurseries, and direct financial assistance to low-income people and communities.

For all of these reasons, I request your NO VOTE on HB2901. It is a bill that wastes significant resources at the expense of the health and welfare of individuals, pregnant women, and other marginalized and vulnerable communities in the state.

Best regards,

ADOPTEE RIGHTS LAW CENTER PLLC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gregory D. Luce', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Gregory D. Luce