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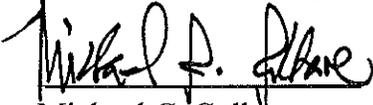
DEACON DAVID W. REYNOLDS
LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Committee on Government Administration and Elections
Public Hearing
2/25/2015

Testimony On
Proposed House Bill 5793
An Act Establishing Safe Haven Day

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference urges the Government Administration and Elections committee to support Proposed H.B. 5793, *An Act Establishing Safe Haven Day*. The Safe Haven program went into effect in October, 2000, to help troubled new mothers and to protect their innocent children. The Safe Haven Act provided mothers, who felt they were unable to care for their newborn child, an option that would benefit both mother and child. This Act protects the mother from prosecution for child abandonment, while eventually providing the child a new family and safe environment. Above all, it would protect the newborn child from the possibility of death caused by abuse, severe neglect or abandonment. Since its enactment, 24 newborn babies have been saved as a result of this program. The Conference fully supports this program and its goal of saving babies from actions that may result in their death. Therefore, the Conference also supports the goal of H.B. 5793, which is to remind people annually that this program exists in our state.

An Annual Day honoring the Safe Haven Program will keep mothers, medical personnel, social service agencies, and law enforcement agencies aware of this life saving program. In the 14 years since this program was adopted, public knowledge of its existence has waned. Hopefully, this proposed legislation, along with other efforts currently under way through DCF and other organizations – and in coordination with the Safe Haven Working Group - will enhance public awareness of this program, resulting in the lives of newborn babies being saved.


Michael C. Culhane
Executive Director