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Government Administration and Elections Committee  
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In SUPPORT of Proposed House Bill 5793  
An Act Establishing Safe Haven Day

Chairman Cassano, Chairman Jutila, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you for hearing House Bill 5793. I am here to testify in support of Proposed House Bill 5793, *An Act Establishing Safe Haven Day*.

As many of you know, the Safe Havens Law provides newborns the necessary protection from potential abuse or neglect and also provides an opportunity to be adopted at an early age into a loving and welcoming family. Under current law, genetic mothers can leave their baby, up to 30 days old, with an employee at any hospital emergency room, anonymously and without fear of legal charges. This provides mothers the opportunity to continue their lives knowing that the best interests of their children have been secured. In fact, over 90-percent of those children who have been protected through the Safe Haven statute have been placed with adopting families. However, babies continue to be illegally abandoned in Connecticut despite this act. The recent death of an abandoned child demonstrates that there is not enough public awareness for this law.

Desperate mothers left in unfavorable situations want their child to be taken care of but believe that they are unable to provide the care and support that their newborn needs. These mothers may believe that there are no other options for their baby after birth and fear that if they drop off their baby at a hospital, they will be legally charged with abandonment. However, this is not the case. The mother will not be arrested or prosecuted as long as the newborn does not have any signs of intentional abuse or neglect. Additionally, the parents have 30-days to change their mind after dropping off the newborn at the hospital.

I believe that there is a substantial lack of public awareness and education regarding the Safe Havens Act for Newborns in Connecticut. This law is currently not reaching the mothers who consider abandoning their babies. Women need to know that they do in fact have somewhere to turn to provide care for their child and ensure that their newborn is in safe hands and eventually placed within a loving and caring home. If we do not provide more public awareness to this law now, the lives of numerous children life end in tragedy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5793.