



State of Connecticut

SENATE

SENATOR DANTÉ BARTOLOMEO

Thirteenth District

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 5793
Government Administration and Elections Committee Public Hearing
February 25, 2015**

Chairman Cassano, Chairman Jutila, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

I regret that I am unable to testify in person, but I thank you for providing the opportunity for public input on House Bill 5793, An Act Establishing Safe Haven Day.

We propose naming April 2nd as Safe Haven Day in order to further awareness of Connecticut's Safe Haven Law, which was adopted after an abandoned baby boy was found frozen to death in a Meriden parking lot in 1988. That baby was discovered by a constituent of mine, Retired Chief of Police Robert Kosienki, whom I spoke with recently about the impact of this tragedy. As you may imagine, the discovery of this poor baby caused shock throughout the community, and the Chief can still describe every detail of the horrific scene like it was yesterday.

Thanks to the Safe Haven Law, a desperate new mother overwhelmed by physical or psychological traumas, who feels incapable of caring for her infant, now has options other than abandonment. She can bring her newborn to an emergency room within the baby's first thirty days of life, and leave him or her in the safety of medical professionals without judgment or fear of retribution. Unless there are signs of abuse to the child, the mother does not have to identify herself or answer any questions. Both mother and infant are given matching identification bracelets and the mother is allowed to leave. But she may return at any time within the thirty days and reclaim her baby without facing any criminal charges.

Unfortunately, as reports of abandoned babies continue to make the news, it is apparent that young mothers are simply not aware of the existence of the Safe Haven Law. The creation of a Safe Haven Day would allow for annual recognition and an opportunity to educate new mothers regarding their options. I believe this simple designation could make a difference and save lives.

I urge you to vote favorably on HB 5793 and thank you for your consideration of this proposal.