

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.
Act 68 of the Regular Session

State of Arkansas
94th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2023

As Engrossed: H1/23/23
A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1098

By: Representatives J. Mayberry, Barker, Bentley, K. Brown, Burkes, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Duke, C. Fite, Haak, D. Hodges, Lundstrum, McAlindon, Vaught, *Duffield*

By: Senators Irvin, B. Davis, J. English

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE SAFE HAVEN ACT; TO CLARIFY THAT A PARENT MAY LEAVE A NEWBORN CHILD WITH MEDICAL PROVIDER STAFF FOLLOWING DELIVERY OF THE CHILD UNDER THE SAFE HAVEN ACT; TO CLARIFY THAT A VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT MAY OPERATE A NEWBORN SAFETY DEVICE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS UNDER THE SAFE HAVEN ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO CLARIFY THAT A VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT MAY OPERATE A NEWBORN SAFETY DEVICE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS UNDER THE SAFE HAVEN ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 5-27-205(c), concerning the affirmative defense to the offense of endangering the welfare of a minor in the first degree, is amended to read as follows:

(c)(1) It is an affirmative defense to a prosecution under this section that a parent voluntarily delivered a child to and left the child with or in, or voluntarily arranged for another person to deliver a child to and leave the child with or in, a medical provider, law enforcement agency, ~~or~~ fire department, or a newborn safety device as provided in § 9-34-201 et seq.



(2)(A) Subdivision (c)(1) of this section does not create a defense to any prosecution arising from any conduct other than the act of delivering a child as described in subdivision (c)(1) of this section.

(B) Subdivision (c)(1) of this section specifically does not constitute a defense to any prosecution arising from an act of abuse or neglect committed before the delivery of a child to a medical provider, law enforcement agency, ~~or~~ fire department, or a newborn safety device as provided in § 9-34-201 et seq.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 9-34-201(1), concerning the definition of "fire department" as it relates to the voluntary delivery of a child to a medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department, is amended to read as follows:

(1) "Fire department" means any organization that ~~is~~ staffed twenty-four (24) hours a day and established

(A) Is established for the prevention or extinguishment of fires, including, but not limited to, without limitation:

(i) A fire ~~departments~~ department organized under a municipal or county ~~ordinances,~~ ordinance;

(ii) An improvement ~~districts,~~ district;

(iii) A membership fee-based private fire ~~departments,~~ department; and

(iv) A volunteer fire ~~departments~~ department; and

(B)(i) Except as provided in subdivision (1)(B)(ii) of this section, is staffed twenty-four (24) hours per day by a medical services provider.

(ii) "Fire department" includes an organization under subdivision (1)(A) of this section that has a dual alarm system that will dispatch the nearest first responder affiliated with the fire department to retrieve a child voluntarily delivered to the fire department under this chapter in the event that all first responders affiliated with the fire department are dispatched for a separate emergency;

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 9-34-202 is amended to read as follows:

9-34-202. Delivery to ~~a~~ medical provider, law enforcement agency, ~~or~~ fire department, or in newborn safety device.

(a) Any medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department shall take possession of a child who is thirty (30) days old or younger without a court order if the parent of the child, without expressing an intent to return for the child, leaves the child:

(1) With or voluntarily delivers the child to the medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department, including without limitation when:

(A) A parent leaves a newborn child with a medical provider staff member after delivery of the newborn child; or

(2) In a newborn safety device that is:

(A) Voluntarily installed by the medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department;

(B) Physically located on a structured wall of or inside a hospital, law enforcement agency, or fire department ~~that is staffed twenty-four (24) hours a day by a medical services provider;~~ and

(C) Located in an area that is conspicuous and visible to the employees of the hospital, law enforcement agency, or fire department.

(b)(1) A medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department that takes possession of a child under subsection (a) of this section shall perform any act necessary to protect the physical health and safety of the child.

(2) A medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department shall:

(A) Keep the identity of a parent who relinquishes a child under this section confidential; and

(B) Not release or otherwise make the identity of the parent available except to a:

(i) Law enforcement agency investigating abuse or neglect of the child that was committed before the child was delivered to the medical provider or law enforcement agency; or

(ii) Prosecuting attorney pursuing charges against a parent for abuse or neglect of the child that was committed before the child was delivered to the medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department.

(c) A medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department shall:

(1) Not be held criminally or civilly liable for any good faith acts or omissions performed under this section; and

(2) Have an affirmative defense against any civil or criminal claim arising out of any act or omission performed under this section.

(d)(1) A medical provider, law enforcement agency, or fire department other than a volunteer fire department that voluntarily installs a newborn safety device shall:

~~(1)~~(A) Be responsible for the cost of the installation; and

~~(2)~~(B) Install an adequate dual alarm system connected to the physical location of the newborn safety device that is:

~~(A)~~(i) Tested at least one (1) time per week to ensure the alarm system is in working order; and

~~(B)~~(ii) Visually checked at least two (2) times per day to ensure the alarm system is in working order.

(2) A volunteer fire department may install a newborn safety device if:

(A) The volunteer fire department complies with subdivision (d)(1) of this section;

(B) The first responders at the volunteer fire department are able to respond to the placement of an infant in the newborn safety device within the shorter of the following:

(i) The response time established by the county in which the volunteer fire department is located; or

(ii) A time frame not to exceed four (4) minutes;

and

(C) The newborn safety device is:

(i) Located within one (1) mile of a medical provider or law enforcement agency; and

(ii) Equipped with:

(a) An alert system that, when the newborn safety device is opened, automatically connects to the 911 system and transmits a request for immediate dispatch of an emergency medical services provider to the location of the newborn safety device; and

(b) A video surveillance system that allows members of the volunteer fire department to monitor the inside of the newborn safety device twenty-four (24) hours per day and that:

(1) Has at least two (2) firefighters who are responsible for monitoring the inside of the newborn safety device twenty-four (24) hours per day; and

(2) Is a surveillance system independent from the alert system described in subdivision (d)(2)(C)(ii)(a).

/s/J. Mayberry

APPROVED: 2/13/23