



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE  
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Testimony on  
*H.B. 7121 "An Act Concerning Revisions to the State's Safe Haven Laws"*  
Before the Human Services Committee  
March 2, 2017

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference which is the public policy office of Connecticut's Catholic Bishops, and a member of the Safe Havens Working Group, urges the members of the Human Services Committee to support H.B. 7121. Due to an actual incident, the Safe Havens Working Group became aware of several shortcomings in the current Safe Haven law which H.B. 7121 addresses. This legislation is a significant step in strengthening the law to protect two of the most fundamental rights of the Safe Haven Law: the right of privacy, and the rights of prospective adoptive parents of Safe Haven babies.

The unfortunate incident leading to this raised bill involved the removal of a Safe Haven baby from its prospective adoptive parents who had nurtured the baby in a supportive home environment for a significant amount of time. DCF removed the baby based on information discussed by hospital staff and DCF, and the results of DNA testing ordered by DCF. The baby was given to another family, who had adopted another Safe Haven baby a year before, for purposes of sibling reunification. The hospital staff and DCF violated the legislative intent of the Safe Haven Law, which is to provide complete anonymity to the parent surrendering the baby and to the baby itself. Due to this incident, a baby was taken from a family seeking adoption and placed with a family that was not currently seeking to adopt another child. Moreover, the baby was removed from the prospective adoptive parents with no advance notice and no opportunity for them to say good-bye.

H.B. 7121 addresses the weaknesses in the current Safe Haven Law by (1) restricting whether DNA testing may be performed by DCF when a Safe Haven baby is involved, (2) more clearly defining the responsibilities of hospital staff under the Safe Haven Law, and (3) implementing a removal hearing process that a prospective adoptive family may invoke. These changes will improve and strengthen the law and help avoid future devastating incidents like the one leading to this proposed legislation.

Accordingly, the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference urges you to support H.B. 7121.

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