



Bastard Nation: the Adoptee Rights Organization

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Stop Safe Haven Baby Boxes Now

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TO: Jacksonville City Council Members; Mayor Donna Deegan
FROM: Marley Greiner Executive Chair, Bastard Nation: the Adoptee Rights Organization and Owner of *Stop Safe Haven Baby Boxes Now* website
Date: March 30, 2026
RE: Letter of opposition to City Council Bill 2026-186, a bill to authorize and appropriate \$314,000 (and perhaps as much as \$600,000) to install 14 Safe Haven Baby Boxes/newborn safety devices in Jacksonville

I am the Executive Chair of Bastard Nation: the Adoptee Rights Organization, the largest adoptee civil rights organization in the United States. We support only full unrestricted access for all adopted persons to their original birth certificates and other adoption documents. Since 2016 we have opposed the legalization and use of “newborn safety devices” aka Safe Haven Baby Boxes (SHBB). I am also the owner of *SSHBBN*, the largest baby abandonment box information, education, and media resource website in the world. On a personal note, my birthmother and her husband were residents of Jacksonville for 30 years and their 2 children attended Englewood High School. I am happy to discuss this letter with members by phone (614-795-6819)

There is no “dumpster baby” epidemic in Jacksonville, Duval County, or even Florida, which has one of the lowest number of discarded newborns in the US. According to [statistics posted by the traditional Safe Haven advocacy organization, A Safe Haven for Newborns](#), since 2000 only 3 discarded newborn cases have been reported in Duval County, (2007, 2009, 2012).

Moreover, since 2020, Florida, first under Home Rule and since last year under state-wide legislation, has installed 13 baby boxes, yet only one case has been reported in all those years (Ocala, 2023).

Installation of 14 boxes in Jacksonville at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer money to “fix” a problem that doesn't exist is puzzling, unnecessary, and fiscally questionable. An ethical and beneficial alternative to these boxes would be the investment of these funds to develop initiatives to help mothers and babies in “crisis,” that would preserve family bonds, not destroy those bonds through unnecessary and unethical baby box means that ignore best practice standards in child welfare and adoption built over the last 100 years. 2026-186 as it now stands promotes and encourages the stripping of the right to identity, heritage, and accurate birth records from those who are tossed in a box anonymously and theoretically adopted and the parental rights and interests of biological parents--especially of the non-relinquishing parent—and so much more

Safe Haven Baby Boxes, moreover, are barely regulated by Florida law, which pertains only to general specifications and location sites. All other control and regulation are reserved for the creators of the Baby Box Movement, and manufacturer of the devices, the multi-million dollar non-profit, Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc, in Woodburn, Indiana. Protocols and procedures, advertising, maintenance checks, and even instructions on media releases when a box is used are controlled by the company. (See Document B).

The Adoptee Rights Movement Opposes Newborn Safety Device /Safe Haven Baby Boxes:

Why it's Important

Safe Haven Baby Box advocates, no matter how well-intentioned, promote the archaic long-discredited “blank slate” theory of adoption, reducing adoptees, (who they assume Box Babies will become) to familyless, historyless commodities—gifts given to strangers with no thought of the consequences to infants' legal and psychological welfare and civil rights or those of their biological parents and families.

Instead, baby boxes are presented as a consumerist “choice”—a simple solution for mothers so “desperate” that unless they can dump their newborns in a box-in-a-wall anonymously, will kill or at least discard them dangerously. These same “dangerous” mothers portrayed as the *raison d'etre* for baby boxes—these Monster Moms--when they use the box, however, are re-framed, redeemed, and praised by proponents and much of the follow-through media, as loving their babies so much they can't bring themselves to kill them. The Safe Haven Baby Box Movement with its boxes in hand, are profoundly misogynistic presenting all girls and women of child-bearing age as potential neonaticists.

Baby Box proponents often say that they don't care who uses their boxes, why they used them, or even what causes mothers to discard their newborns. **Public policy cannot be built on such a flimsy plank.** Advocates say they just want mothers to use their boxes; thus, trivializing and ignoring the complex and messy causes of infant discard:

- poverty
- inability to secure affordable medical treatment and reproductive health care; decrease in reproductive rights
- denial or ignorance of pregnancy
- draconian immigration policies and practices
- substance abuse and physical and sexual abuse and trafficking
- shame, crime, mental illness, dysfunctional families, social isolation, and poor communication skills.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes do not even act as a band-aid especially under the current drastic cutbacks in social and medical services (Medicaid, ACA, rural hospital closures) and disregard for civil and human rights.

Yet when asked to provide persuasive evidence of the efficacy of Safe Haven Baby Boxes, who uses them, and why, advocates can cite no studies or any other proof **because none exists**. We have only a “don't ask” intuitive “we just know.”

Ironically, the number of reported discard cases throughout the US since the Safe Haven Baby Box concept was introduced 10 years ago has remained steady at about 35 each year. Only a tiny number of parents (76 as of his writing) have followed the SHBB drive-by anonymous relinquishment plan and its disdain for informed consent, non-directed counseling, and pesky paper-signing. A simple feel-good “solution” for a complex problems that risk the health and lives of pregnant women, new mothers, and their babies.

We are especially concerned that the SHBB scheme openly promulgates the idea that concealed pregnancy is easy and safe. A widely viewed 9 minute “PSA” on the SHBB Inc website and YouTube, targeted at high school students, suggests that it is OK to hide pregnancy from boyfriends and parents and forgo pre-and post-natal care since a box is handy. It implies that pregnancy does not incur complications (example: ectopic pregnancy, hypermesis gravidarum, gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and congenital disorders), and that unattended delivery (in this video, apparently in a car) is simple, pristine—and safe. This video can kill a mother It can kill a baby. In fact, according to news reports, a few Box Babies though initially described as “healthy,” suffered from serious health problems (New Mexico and Indiana) and one died from severe congenital disorders at 11 months of age (Arkansas.). In Idaho, a dead baby was placed in a baby box. We have little information but SHBB Inc posted on social media that a mother OD'd and died-- a suspected suicide --shortly after boxing her baby.

Document A at the bottom of this letter is our Talking Points sheet that details the Adoptee Rights Movements' objection to Safe Haven Baby Boxes.

We are also concerned with Safe Haven Baby Box Inc policies, including monopoly control of baby boxes, mandated “business” procedures, advertising, funding, and safety, health, and welfare regulations or lack thereof, some of which we have already mentioned. One specific problem, however should be the concern of this city council: safety and liability.

The USDA does not consider SHBBs to be medical devices. Unless things have changed recently, **boxes are not tested by Underwriters Laboratory; thus, unlike everything electric in your home from power cords to refrigerators, are not UL certified**. Importantly, manufacturers of electrical devices that are not certified and 3rd parties that utilize them—in the case of Safe Haven Baby Boxes, the state, municipalities, and locations that authorize their installation and use—could be held liable for death, personal injuries, or property damage caused by non-complaint devices.

Document B at the bottom of this letter is our talking points sheet covering troublesome details on protocols, practices, and safety issues

We are not alone in opposition. No adoptee rights, birthparent rights, and adoption reform organization in the US today supports newborn safety devices. Those include but are not limited to Adoptees United, the Adoptee Rights Law Center, the Society for Adoption Truth, the National Center for Adoption and Permanency, the

Coalition for Truth and Transparency in Adoption, the Iowa Adoptee & Family Coalition, Michigan Advocates for Adoptees, New York Adoptee Rights Coalition, Texas Adoptee Rights Coalition, and the family preservation organization Saving Our Sisters. Others include pioneer traditional Safe Haven organizations A Safe Haven for Newborns (Miami), Save Abandoned Babies Foundation (Chicago), and AMT-Children of Hope (New York) as well as the Florida Adoption Council, the Florida affiliate of the Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproduction Attorneys (Quad A).

Last year, the [Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics at Yale University's Infant Abandonment Working Group](#) published *Legislative Report: US Policy Responses to Infant Abandonment and Infanticide*. The Center also sent an [open letter to HSS](#) signed by over 100 child welfare and maternal health scholars, clinicians, legislators, policymakers, educators, adoptee, birthparent, and adoption advocates, legal professionals, indigenous leaders, and concerned citizens from across the US to request increased HHS involvement in public health policy responses to crisis pregnancies and asking for federal oversight of the rapidly expanding network of **unregulated Safe Haven Baby Boxes**. (These documents and more are available at the general working group link above.)

Events leading up to the relinquishment of a child by any method, is not the first crisis in a mother's life. How does sticking a baby in a box anonymously and walking away arrest that crisis and improve the lives of girls and women subjected to domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, poverty, substance abuse, lack of health care services and counseling, or suffering from the social and economic disconnect and dysfunction rampant in the US today? Add the overriding personal shame and disempowerment of anonymous baby abandonment embedded in this Devil's mix, and you've got a recipe for disaster stamped with the promotion and approval of the state, city, and special interests.

What is needed are transparent programs that serve women, children and families in crisis not endorse and legalize programs that sever familial relationships, create a permanent "solution" to a temporary problem, endanger the lives of mothers and babies, abrogate the civil rights of parents, their babies and the adults they will become, and maintaining a system of secret adoption practices.

Please join us. Support family preservation. Support programs that help-- not hurt --families Look at alternatives to Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Please vote DO NOT PASS on 2016-186. Thank you!

DOCUMENT A

STOP SAFE HAVEN BABY BOXES NOW

Why We Oppose Safe Haven Baby Boxes

Adoptee rights and adoption reform organizations throughout the United States oppose deceptive relinquishment practices that are rooted in shame and secrecy, lead to drastic permanent solutions to temporary problems, and create a population of adopted people who have no birth records, identity, or history.

We seek ethics, transparency, and accountability in adoption and in related child welfare practices, not band-aid and gimmick solutions to social, political, and mental health problems that cause newborn discards. Contrary to long-standing and established child welfare policies, the use of baby boxes (sometimes called “newborn safety devices”):

- Creates a secretive and shadow child welfare system that eliminates informed consent, a child’s identifying information, and any record of the social and medical histories of newborns. Baby boxes operate to eliminate a child’s right to identity by eliminating accurate birth registrations and records.
- Commodifies infants and normalizes “legal” baby abandonment as a consumer choice, without acknowledging the lifetime psychological consequences for the baby and the mother, including, but not limited to, abandonment issues, shame, guilt, substance abuse, depression, low self-esteem, and suicidal ideation. Boxes represent state-promoted throwaway culture; some critics call them instruments of child abuse.
- Replaces professional best practice standards with unprofessional and unethical “relinquishment” procedures. Baby boxes instead give vulnerable parents a right to abandon an infant out of convenience or ignorance, with no counseling, documentation, or discussion of established alternatives, such as adequate medical care, financial and material family preservation assistance, or crisis nurseries.
- Deprives the non-surrendering parent of the right to rear her or his own child. Baby boxes eliminate any protections to prove that a person using the box has a legal right to surrender the baby. Embarrassed, frightened, or abusive partners, spouses or family members, and even sex traffickers, will use (and undoubtedly have used) baby boxes without the consent or knowledge of the (other) parent, with no repercussions. Baby box proponents dismiss the real, dangerous, and violent situations experienced by women, simply advocating that “if your baby is taken, just call the police.”
- Disenfranchises natural parents—particularly the non-surrendering parent (usually the father)—of their right to due process by eliminating their ability to locate the child, thus denying them knowledge of (among other things) the dependency proceeding to which they are a party. State-based Putative Father Registries, touted as a safeguard, are rendered useless since records are filed by the name of the mother who remains anonymous by law.
- Creates at-risk adoptions due to possible litigation from the non-surrendering parent or biological family members who may learn of the abandonment and seek custody.

- Contravenes family reunification guidelines of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (AFSA) and dispenses with tribal rights embedded in the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which can also lead to federal litigation.
- Encourages women to keep problematic pregnancies a secret. The promotion of baby boxes discourages family and professional communication and eliminates assistance for sexual and physical abuse, mental illness, substance abuse, and social isolation—factors that cause nearly every newborn discard. Studies indicate that once a pregnancy is acknowledged and discussed the chance of discard almost always disappears.
- Hides crimes such as rape, incest, spousal and partner abuse, and human trafficking.
- Promotes and supports the non-profit ministry Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc., a million-dollar corporation that controls the manufacture, promotion, sales, installation, and referral of women to baby boxes in the United States. It has created the baby box market and lobbies legislatures, produces boxes at its own factory, installs the devices, operates a hotline that refers pregnant women to box locations near them, and holds press conferences when a newborn is left in a box. Rather than protect legitimate privacy interests of the infant, it uses boxed children as fundraising tools for its ministry.
- Discourages women from seeking pre-and post-natal care, instead encouraging dangerous and unsafe unattended births in the community, outside of a hospital.

Baby boxes do not address the causes of infant discard. Anonymously dropping a baby into a box and walking away does not obviate or solve the root causes of newborn discard/neo-naticide, which are:

- poverty
- inability to secure affordable medical treatment and reproductive health care
- denial or ignorance of pregnancy
- draconian immigration policies and practices
- substance abuse and physical and sexual abuse
- shame, crime, mental illness, dysfunctional families, social isolation, and poor communication skills.

Stop Safe Haven Baby Boxes Now!

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stopshbnow.org

Document B

Safe Haven Baby Boxes: Concerns Beyond Adoption and Child Welfare Practices. Monopoly Control, Policy/ Procedures, Funding/Cost, Safety/Health/ Welfare/ Regulation

Monopoly Control

Bills to legalize the use of Safe Haven Baby Boxes are vendor bills that benefit one company, Safe Haven Baby Boxes Inc in Woodburn, Indiana, a **multi-million-dollar ministry that is the only source of the devices in the US**. The company invented the Baby Box Movement and market it, writes bills and lobbies lawmakers, produces baby boxes at its own factory, installs the devices, trains location staff, runs a hotline that refers pregnant women and new mothers to box locations near them, and holds press conferences when a newborn is left in a box. Rather than protect legitimate privacy interests of Box Babies, it uses boxed children as fundraising tools for its ministry.

Box Operation, Policy, and Practices

The signage on and around Safe Haven Baby Box locations serves as an advertisement for Safe Haven Baby Boxes Inc. Some locations reportedly attempt to include their own signage that would direct parents to consider a traditional personal walk-in hand-over or other related services, which the company denies. Some locations reportedly ask to literature on local medical, legal, and other support resources available to baby box users, which again the company denies.

Instead, SHBB Inc offers their own information packet in an orange bag found inside the box. From what we have observed in SHBB Inc online posts, news stories, and in legislative and committee meetings, the packet contains advertising about the company along with minimal and possibly wrong medical and legal information. A box located in the Cincinnati-area referred mothers to a midwife in Fort Wayne, Indiana, approximately 180 miles away. The box in Norwalk, Iowa, refers them to a medical service in St. Louis 350 miles away. [The information sheet on post-natal care](#) (also online in FAQ form) is minimal and unprofessional. The Ohio Health Review Board considers the bag, “debris” as per state law, and banned the orange bag from the device, suggesting that it could be placed in a container or rack next to the box. The board also ordered the company to include Ohio Department of Health and Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services literature regarding state services and other information (we are not sue what) in the orange bag, but have no idea if the the company complied.

SHBB locations are required to inform SHBB Inc within 2 hours of a drop-off; then prohibited from announcing the case publicly until the company shapes an official announcement that appears in news and social media .In 2025, a fire station in Alabama was taken to task by SHBB Inc social media when the local newspaper reported a drop-off before the company issued an “official” statement.

Finally, SHBB Inc runs its own private “family registry.” The company’s low info orange bag includes a printed form that parents can fill out at the time of drop-off or submit any time later to the company to record health and social histories—and even include parent identities. This form compares poorly to the professionally designed detailed voluntary medical and social history forms available to parents through state agencies across the country at traditional Safe Haven locations. The SHBB Inc form is held “anonymous” and as far as we know, is not available to appropriate state agencies or child placing agencies appointed by the state to administer custody, care, and baby placement, Nor, as far as we know, is this information given to the adoptive parents of Box Babies. The company for its own unknown purposes, seems to squirrel away personal and “private” information

about babies and parents that in normal adoptions would most likely be shared and the adopted individuals could later obtain.

Funding and Cost of Safe Haven Baby Boxes

SHBB Inc sells its product and service to lawmakers and the public claiming the acquisition/lease of a box is a voluntary, local initiative funded not by public funds but by voluntary donations from individuals, ministries, churches, businesses, fraternal organizations, non-profits, anti-abortion organizations, and foundations. Original SHBB legislation usually does not include state funding, but over the last few years some states have amended their laws to add taxpayer funding. Some cities have taken money from COVID, Homeland Security, and other special government accounts.

SHBB Inc initially operated on these private donations, and still collects them. But through various 990s posted online we have documented over \$2 million in state and local taxpayer funded allocations for boxes (there is probably more) for a “service” that is publicized free of public funding and paid for by voluntary contributions. The company does not publicize these taxpayer funds and insists that it does not take any.

Representative tax payer direct funding or through grants include, but not limited to: Indiana (\$1,000,000); Arkansas (\$230,000) Alabama (\$20,000). Montana (\$160,000), Cold Lake, Florida (\$25,000), Beech Grove, Indiana (\$19,000) Helena, Montana (\$15,000), Big River, Montana (\$15,000). New Mexico, with no box law on the books, allocated \$330,000.

San Antonio, Texas, allocated nearly \$450,000 for 12 boxes (reduced to 10) that remain uninstalled [due to the City Attorney’s unspecified concerns about SHBB Inc’s proposed contract with the city.](#)

Trustees at Union Township, Ohio, outside of Cincinnati, decided it was OK to pay outright the approximate \$16,000 lease fee and other costs in their entirety with taxpayer money, not donations. When local pro-life conservative political watchdog Chris Hicks visited the fire station, to see what the box was about, he found the facility empty with a working box in its wall. He continued his investigation, chronicling it on Facebook and YouTube. Digging in, the over-spending trustees dug in and hired an extra firefighter to babysit the facility and keep the box running. SHBB Inc promised to fund the new firefighter but did not. ([See video, courtesy of Chris Hicks.](#)) Thus, local taxpayers were dunned not only the cost of the box but for an extra full-time firefighter at union scale with benefits Hicks reported his findings (which included other violations of Ohio law regarding maintenance and sanitation) to the Ohio Public Health Review Board. His documented report led to the Ohio Department of Health shutting down out-of-compliance boxes until problems were fixed. (*See below for more safety issues.*)

Safety, Health, and Welfare of Mother and Child

Promotion and the availability of baby abandonment boxes discourages women from seeking pre-and post-natal care. Instead, SHBB Inc facilitates those in “crisis pregnancies” to undergo dangerous and unsafe unattended births and care outside of a medical and safe setting.

Unsafe Pregnancy and Birth Practices: SHBB Inc says that it suggests its callers seek medical and counseling services, pre- and postnatal care, safe delivery, financial assistance, etc, **but its 9 minute video (deceptively called a Public Service Announcement) with over 28K views on its YouTube channel, is a step-by-step guide, targeting teenage girls, on how to keep pregnancy, childbirth, and “relinquishment-by-box concealed—a secret.** The video panders the weird idea that secret pregnancy, is physically and emotionally easy to pull off, and that unattended childbirth is pristine, uncomplicated and safe. We have shown this video to

professionals in OB care and child welfare, and they have been horrified by this message. Those who follow the guidance of the video could die. Their babies could die.

According to SHBB Inc, the youngest mother they have guided anonymously to the box was 12. Would you want your 12-year old daughter or granddaughter, or sister, or neighbor to follow this message?

This is the link to the [video](#).

Health of Box Babies and Mothers: Advocates and news reports routinely claim that babies left in boxes are “healthy and well cared for:”contradicting their “fact” that their mothers would not care for them and might have killed them without the box option. We know, however, of 4 cases (very possibly more) where babies were announced “healthy” but weren’t; and another case where a deceased newborn was dropped off.

- April 2022: a baby girl boxed in [Hammond, Indiana](#), had a stroke either during or shortly after birth and reportedly may suffer lifelong neurological problems.
- May 2023: a newborn boy was boxed in [Benton, Arkansas](#) and pronounced “healthy” though transferred to hospice 1 month after birth diagnosed with pseudo-Zellwegers (D-bi functional protein deficiency), other serious medical issues, and suffered 30-40 seizures a day. He died at 11 months of age.
- February 2024 a newborn boy boxed in [Belen, New Mexico](#) was immediately admitted to the local neonate ICU suffering from pneumonia and hypothermia, and was hospitalized for a month.
- October 2024 : a deceased newborn was left in a box in [Blackfoot, Idaho](#). The mother was located and eventually sentenced to 10 years probation an 100 hours of community service. Moreover, in February 2024, SHBB Inc announced on TikTok that one of its Box Mothers OD’d and died shortly after boxing her baby—a suspected suicide. (The video seems to have been taken down [but here is what we wrote about it](#))

Safe Haven Boxes are Unregulated

The USDA does not consider SHBBs to be medical devices, Furthermore, they **are not tested by Underwriters Laboratory; thus, not UL certified.**

According to the [Quality Inspection.org](#) website, equipment that should have UL certification includes (1) *Electrical and electronic equipment (appliances, power supplies, etc.)* and (2) *Alarm signaling devices (smoke detectors, fire suppression and alarm monitoring)*. **This means that your microwave, TV, nightstand lamp, and even your power cords should be UL compliant, but electrically- operated baby boxes, that contain a multiple alarm system, are not.**

Importantly, manufacturers of electrical devices that are not certified and 3rd parties that utilize them—in the case of Safe Haven Baby Boxes, the state, locations and municipalities that authorize their use—could be held liable for death, personal injuries, or property damage caused by non-complaint devices.

Last year the SHBB Inc CEO said that getting UL certification is expensive and they have been working on getting it for 2 years. According to the Quality Inspection site, “A small and simple product could cost between \$2-5k, requiring several samples per test, and take about 3-4 weeks to complete the testing.” More complex products can cost more \$50k and take over a month. SHBB Inc’s published 990s indicate the company can well afford certification even for high-end testing. Their 2024 990 (November 11, 2025) indicates an income of over \$4.5 million.

Revised February 17, 2026

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