



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

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September 4, 2001

The Honorable Thomas Gannon
Chairman – House Judiciary Committee
House Post Office
Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Fax: 717-705-1860

Dear Representative Gannon:

On behalf of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania and its affiliate the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, I express our support for the concept of a "safe haven," as described in Senate Bill 654, which is before the House Judiciary Committee for a public hearing on September 5, 2001.

I submit for your consideration a document drawn up by county children and youth administrators addressing safe haven legislation, referring to House Bills 470 and 1582 and Senate Bills 474 and 654.

Although we support the concept of safe haven legislation, CCAP and PCYA urge adjustments in the language of SB 654 so that there is clarity of purpose and process when handling infants.

If you have any questions about our comments, please contact me at the telephone listed above.

Sincerely,

Terri Houck
Director of Governmental Relations

Enclosure



Re: HB 470, HB 1582, SB 474 and SB 654**Position on Safe Haven Legislation:**

PCYA supports the concept of a "Safe Haven", as generally described in the above legislation, as one means of diminishing the likelihood of infants being abused and/or being abandoned and therefore at risk of death through exposure.

PCYA feels that SB 654 (p.n. 1272) offers the most comprehensive approach to this issue. We would like to assist, however, in clarification on the following sections:

- Sec. 6303(B) and 6405(A) appear to conflict regarding the roles and duties of the Health Care Provider (e.g. should a security officer perform a medical evaluation, as indicated in 6305(A)(2)?);
- Sec. 6406(B) should be changed to reflect that "If there is reason to suspect" is the criteria for making a CPS referral to the County Children and Youth Agency (CCYA), not "If it is determined", and referral to Law Enforcement is required only in egregious cases under the CPSL;
- Sec. 6407- The consequence of failure to report an infant having been left at a Safe Haven should be more serious than a summary offense;
- Sec. 6409(B)- Duties of the CCYA includes investigation of reports under the CPSL;
- Sec. 2- We feel that implementation should be within 180 days of the promulgation of regulations by DPW to allow the parties to develop the necessary resources to responsibly implement the legislation.