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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

March 20, 2012

TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Rosita C. Youngblood
SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship – Adding police stations to Pa. Safe Haven Law

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation amending the Newborn Protection Act (Ch. 65 of Title 23 Domestic Relations), which is also known as the Pennsylvania Safe Haven Law, to allow police stations to serve as safe havens in Pennsylvania.

Recently, a new mother unable to care for her newborn child left her infant with Philadelphia police officers, thinking she was doing the right thing and abiding by the state's Safe Haven Law. Even the police officers believed the mother was following appropriate state law, but soon found out that, unfortunately, Pennsylvania's Safe Haven Law only allows a newborn up to 28 days old to be dropped off at a hospital, and nowhere else.

I intend to introduce legislation amending this law to allow infants to be dropped off at police stations, as well as hospitals, so that individuals who are unable to care for their infant do what's in the best interest of the child. Under my proposal, police officers would then be directed to take the infant to the nearest hospital in order for him or her to receive immediate care and attention.

Most law enforcement agencies are already providing safe haven to our youngest citizens, but we need to make sure that parents who are trying to do the moral thing under very difficult circumstances, are protected by state law. We do not want to dissuade or deter parents from seeking assistance from law enforcement when they are unable to care for their infant child.

If you would like to join me in co-sponsoring this legislation, or would like a copy of the language, please contact Ashley Jere' roach at aroach@pahouse.net, or by calling 787-7727.