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Newborn Girl Declared Safe Haven Baby

(Des Moines, IA) - Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) officials have used the state's safe haven procedure for the 46th time since the law went into effect. A baby girl, born Sept. 27, was released to the custody of DHS. Specific details are withheld in order to protect the identity of the parents and the children. Through Iowa's Safe Haven law, parents, or their authorized representative, can leave infants age 30 days or younger at a hospital or health care facility without fear of prosecution for abandonment.

"The purpose of this law is to protect the lives of newborns who are in danger of abandonment," said Janee Harvey, DHS Division Administrator of Adult, Children and Family Services. "We want to ensure Iowans know that Safe Haven is an available option if they cannot care for their newborn safely. We recognize that these decisions are often made in the midst of crisis and the protocols are built accordingly." Safe Haven prioritizes the health and physical safety of the infant(s), as well as the anonymity of the parent or authorized individual who relinquishes custody of the child.

The Safe Haven law was approved in the wake of a high-profile case in 2001 involving a teen mother in eastern Iowa who killed her home-delivered newborn. Infants who are safe haven babies are placed with currently approved foster or adoptive families. All states have Safe Haven laws, although provisions differ.

If you are interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please visit www.iowafosterandadoption.org.

For more information on the Safe Haven procedure: <http://dhs.iowa.gov/safe-haven>.

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Media contact:
Matt Highland
mhighla@dhs.state.ia.us
515-281-4848

If you are interested in adopting a safe haven baby, you need to become an approved foster or adoptive family. For more information based on your service area, visit <https://iowafosterandadoption.org/>