

Weekly GOP radio address: Rep. Schutt's safe haven "baby box" bill signed into law

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MADISON - Representative Schutt (R - Clinton) released the weekly radio address on behalf of Wisconsin Legislative Republicans.

Hi, I'm Ellen Schutt. I'm glad Wisconsin will now be able to provide parents in distress an option to complete anonymity when making the difficult choice to surrender their newborn.

Wisconsin's Safe Haven law has long served as a critical safety net for infants believed to be under 72 hours old, allowing parents to anonymously relinquish their child to designated authorities. However, a crucial aspect has been missing: a method of relinquishment without the face-to-face interaction.

Act 79 allows a municipality to install a newborn infant safety device at a hospital, fire station, or law enforcement agency building so a parent can relinquish their newborn with complete anonymity. The building where the baby box is located must be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Once a baby is placed in the designated box, an alarm is automatically triggered inside the building to alert them.

Wisconsin's 2001 Safe Haven Law carried a stigma, especially in small communities, because parents were afraid others would find out they gave up their children. Sadly, this came to a head earlier this year after a newborn was found dead in a field in Whitewater. Members of the community came to me expressing an interest in making sure this did not happen again, and I am glad we were able to find a

solution and get this law enacted.

With their potential to provide a safe and anonymous option, baby boxes will save lives.