

# Wisconsin Catholic Conference: Celebrates new safe haven baby box law

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The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice of Wisconsin's bishops, celebrates yesterday's enactment of Senate Bill 369 as 2023 Wisconsin Act 79, authorizing newborn infant safety devices (also called baby boxes) under the state's safe haven law. The WCC thanks Governor Tony Evers, bill authors Senator Joan Ballweg and Representative Ellen Schutt, and all legislators who supported this bipartisan legislation.

We know that there are women in complex circumstances who will decide to relinquish their child after giving birth. Act 79 authorizes the installation of newborn infant safety devices in hospitals, fire stations, and law enforcement agency buildings where a parent can anonymously relinquish an infant under the age of 72 hours.

This law embraces both mother and child, providing women with a last resort that protects their own safety and that of their child. It gives birth mothers the security of knowing that their children will find love and stability.

Even as the WCC celebrates this new law, we will continue to work with all legislators to ensure that, whenever possible, mothers and children remain united and have every opportunity to thrive. There are many proposals that get us closer to this goal: expanding postpartum care, reducing costs for birth, eliminating racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality, supporting birth mothers after adoption, removing sales tax on feminine hygiene products and baby supplies, increasing the tax exemption for dependents, funding pregnancy resource centers, adoption tax credits, and more.

The Catholic Church stands ready and willing to walk alongside women experiencing challenges during pregnancy and parenthood. The Church's initiative, Walking with Moms in Need, seeks to ensure that no woman is alone when faced with such challenges. If you or someone you know is in need, please reach out to a local parish or Catholic Charities. Pregnancy resource centers are also an invaluable source of support and can be found across Wisconsin.

Together, we must build an economy and society where all women and children can flourish.