



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**July 12, 2016**

**Motion 14681**

**Proposed No. 2016-0267.2**

**Sponsors Dunn and Kohl-Welles**

1           A MOTION calling on the executive to support efforts to  
2           increase the safety of infants and prevent child  
3           abandonment in King County.

4           WHEREAS, Washington state's safe haven law, RCW 13.34.360, allows a parent  
5           within seventy-two hours of a child's birth to transfer his or her newborn to a qualified  
6           person at a hospital, fire station or federally designated rural health clinic and do so  
7           anonymously without fear of criminal prosecution for abandoning, or failing to support,  
8           the newborn, and

9           WHEREAS, the safe haven law has been in effect in Washington state since  
10          2002, and

11          WHEREAS, Motion 14104 requested that the executive convene a safety of  
12          newborn children task force for King County by April 2014 to provide a report with  
13          recommendations to the King County council and executive, including recommendations  
14          on how King County can engage in an ongoing, regionally consistent public information  
15          campaign to educate service providers and the public about safe surrender of newborns,  
16          and

17          WHEREAS, both the task force's report and a minority report submitted by Safe  
18          Place for Newborns of Washington, recommended increasing public awareness, and

19 WHEREAS, the task force identified a range of locations where posting,  
20 distributing or otherwise disseminating materials or information that would educate  
21 would-be parents and the general public about the safe haven law might raise awareness  
22 of the law and lead to safeguarding newborns, and

23 WHEREAS, the locations recommended for consideration included locations  
24 where pregnant women or individuals of child-bearing age might be present, and

25 WHEREAS, the locations recommended for consideration included locations  
26 where providers serve pregnant women or individuals of child-bearing age, and

27 WHEREAS, the methods and locations recommended for communicating  
28 information about the safe haven law were far-reaching and presumed a general public  
29 unfamiliarity with the provisions of the safe haven law, and

30 WHEREAS, unawareness of the options provided under the safe haven law could  
31 result in individuals making decisions in a moment of crisis that place newborns, who are  
32 exceptionally vulnerable within the first few hours of life, in perilous, life-endangering  
33 conditions, and

34 WHEREAS, it is clear that the need to educate the public, including parents and  
35 would-be parents, of the existence of the safe haven law and identify locations where  
36 infants may be safely surrendered, persists, and

37 WHEREAS, on the evening of March 25, 2016, a naked, bloody and crying  
38 newborn with its umbilical cord still attached was found in an Everett, Washington, trash  
39 compactor, and

40 WHEREAS, a fire station where newborns can be safely surrendered was less  
41 than one-half mile from where the baby was found;

42 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

43 A. The executive is requested, within existing county resources and through  
44 integration with existing programs and systems, to develop and implement a public  
45 information campaign to educate individuals of child-bearing age, service providers who  
46 may come in contact with individuals of child-bearing age, county employees and county  
47 partners about the provisions of the safe haven law, the places where a newborn may be  
48 safely surrendered by a parent within seventy-two hours of the child's birth, and a phone  
49 number that individuals may call to obtain information on where to safely surrender a  
50 newborn. For the purposes of this motion, gifts, bequests or donations, including in-kind  
51 donations, to support the public information campaign and best starts for kids levy funds  
52 appropriated after the approval by ordinance of the implementation plan described in  
53 Ordinance 18088 Section 8.B, are not "existing county resources."

54 B. The campaign should seek to:

55 1. Produce and disseminate simple educational materials for county  
56 workers informing them about the safe haven law, with special attention to county  
57 workers who might come into contact with would-be parents including, but not limited  
58 to, employees in Public Health - Seattle & King County;

59 2. Provide education to county workers, with special attention to county  
60 employees who might come into contact with would-be parents, on how to disseminate  
61 information about the safe haven law to clients or service recipients;

62 3. Disseminate information on the safe haven law at King County facilities and  
63 locations where would-be parents could receive or see it; and

64           4. Explore partnership opportunities with entities external to King County  
65 government for posting or otherwise disseminating information about the safe haven law  
66 in their facilities and locations and to their clients including, but not limited to,  
67 Harborview Medical Center, providers contracting with the department of community  
68 and human services and fire stations.

69           C. The executive is requested to choose the education materials that will be used  
70 as part of the public information campaign in collaboration with relevant partners and  
71 county departments as well as the organization Safe Place for Newborns of Washington  
72 and to select how materials and information will be disseminated.

73           D. The public information campaign's education materials on the safe haven law  
74 should include clearly displayed information about where and to whom parents can  
75 relinquish an infant under the law and contact information, such as the toll-free number  
76 1-877-440-2229, where individuals can obtain specific guidance about safe locations for  
77 surrender.

78           E. The public information campaign's education materials on the safe haven law  
79 developed by the executive should be accessible in multiple languages based on input  
80 from Safe Place for Newborns of Washington and other relevant county and external  
81 partners.

82           F. The executive is requested to transmit to the council by December 15, 2016, a  
83 report on the status of the implementation of the public information campaign, in the  
84 form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall  
85 retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.

86 G. The report on the status of the implementation of the public information  
87 campaign should include:

88 1. The date on which the public information campaign was in place or is  
89 expected to be in place, if the campaign is not yet in place when the report is written;

90 2. A list of the King County departments and divisions that will receive  
91 education materials and training on the safe haven law and on how to inform, when  
92 appropriate, would-be parents with whom they come in contact about the law;

93 3. A list of King County locations that will display or otherwise disseminate  
94 education materials or information about the safe haven law;

95 4. A list of the King County partners that will display or otherwise disseminate  
96 education materials or information about the safe haven law and their locations  
97 throughout King County; and

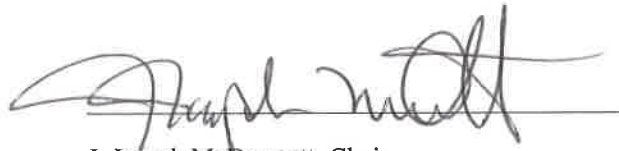
98 5. Information on the plan for ensuring that the outreach campaign, both the

99 production and dissemination of materials and the training of individuals to disseminate  
100 materials or information to would-be parents occurs on an ongoing basis.  
101

Motion 14681 was introduced on 5/23/2016 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 7/11/2016, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn,  
Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski, Mr. Upthegrove, Ms. Kohl-Welles  
and Ms. Balducci  
No: 0  
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



J. Joseph McDermott, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** None