

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5522

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### C 182 L 18

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Requiring the department of social and health services and, after July 1, 2018, the department of children, youth, and families to collect and publicly report information on the safe surrender of newborn children.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health & Housing (originally sponsored by Senators Palumbo, Fain and Nelson).

#### **Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health & Housing** **House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services**

**Background:** In 2002, the Safety of Newborn Children Act was enacted offering a safe place to leave a newborn child, confidentially, and without fear of punishment. A parent, within 72 hours of a child's birth, can transfer the baby to a qualified person at a hospital, fire station, or federally designated rural health clinic, and do so anonymously without fear of criminal prosecution for abandoning or failing to support the child. Safe haven laws have been adopted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The National Safe Haven Alliance estimates that over 1000 infants have been saved over the past decade under safe haven laws.

In 2014, following the abandonment of a deceased newborn girl on the side of a road near a hospital, King County created the Safety of Newborn Children Task Force (Task Force) to examine ways to improve the implementation of the Safety of Newborn Children Act throughout the county. One of the Task Force's recommendations is to develop protocols with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for annually reviewing Child Protective Services' intake data on newborns relinquished under the Safety of Newborn Children Act.

Child welfare programs and services administered by DSHS will be assumed by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) on July 1, 2018.

**Summary:** Beginning July 31, 2018, DCYF must collect and compile information regarding the number of newborns transferred under the Safety of Newborn Children Act and report its findings to the public annually, which may be by posting on its website.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	1	
Senate	46	1	
Senate	48	0	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate	48	1	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** June 7, 2018