

**MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
WEST END PLACE**

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

TO: Members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary
FROM: James F. Driscoll, Esq., Executive Director
RE: House Bill 1334, An Act Relative to the Safe Placement of Newborn Infants
DATE: May 18, 2011

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference (“Conference”) respectfully submits this testimony in favor of House Bill 1334, “An Act Relative to the Safe Placement of Newborn Infants.”

Since its inception in 2004, the Baby Safe Haven law has provided a much needed resource for individuals who, for whatever personal reason, feel they cannot properly care for a newborn infant. As of this date, fifteen babies have been surrendered to local hospitals, police or fire stations in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. One can only guess what would have happened to those children if a parent felt there was no place to turn for assistance.

House Bill 1334 will provide for and expand the safety net beyond the current boundaries of a fixed location. It is a natural progression in and extension of a program that has proven to be successful in saving lives. It will bring the “safe haven” to the infant when the infant is not or cannot be brought to the “safe haven”.

The addition of Emergency Responders to the list of approved designated safe haven facilities will make critical resources more readily available to individuals who need them the most. Most importantly, it will save the lives of more newborn infants. We urge the Committee to give House Bill 1334 a favorable report recommending its passage.

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference is the public policy office of the Roman Catholic Bishops in the Commonwealth, representing the Archdiocese of Boston and the Dioceses of Fall River, Springfield, and Worcester