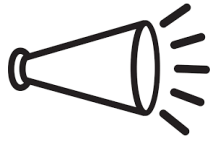


# Florida Voice



## For The Unborn

P.O. Box 12152 | Tallahassee, FL 32317

### **Florida Voice for the Unborn Expresses Deep Disappointment with the Florida Senate for Gutting the Baby Box Bill**

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\*For Immediate Release\*

**Contact:** Andrew Shirvell, Founder and Executive Director, at (850) 404-3414 or [Andrew@FloridaVoiceForTheUnborn.com](mailto:Andrew@FloridaVoiceForTheUnborn.com).

Executive Director Andrew Shirvell today issued the following statement regarding the Florida Senate’s floor action on Senate Bill 122/House Bill 133 (Surrendered Newborn Infants):

“Florida Voice for the Unborn is greatly dismayed that the Florida Senate passed House Bill 133 today by removing the provision for the regulation of baby boxes. A baby box is actually a temperature-controlled safety device that accepts surrendered newborn infants and comes equipped with an alarm system that is triggered once a newborn is placed inside. As passed by the House of Representatives on March 18, 2021, House Bill 133 would have amended Florida’s existing Safe Haven Law to explicitly permit the use of baby boxes for the safe surrendering of newborn infants at hospitals, fire stations, and emergency medical service stations that are staffed 24 hours a day.”

Shirvell continued, “The Florida Senate retained the provision of House Bill 133 that expands the age at which an infant may be legally surrendered in Florida, from 7 days to 30 days old – and that is a great thing. However, the last-minute removal of the ‘baby boxes’ from this legislation, which has been informally known as the ‘Baby Box Bill,’ is completely unacceptable.”

Shirvell further remarked, “Baby boxes have a proven track record of deterring illegal newborn abandonments and saving lives. Since Indiana installed the nation’s first Safe Haven Baby Box several years ago, there have been no reported illegal newborn abandonments in that state. And in 2019, Indiana had 9 newborn infants surrendered via baby boxes.”

Shirvell continued, “In December 2020, Ocala became the first city in Florida to install a Safe Haven Baby Box, which is located at the southwest corner of the fire administration lobby tower on the brand new MLK First Responder Campus. While nothing in Florida law explicitly prohibits

the use of baby boxes, a statewide law is still very much needed because such a law would provide necessary regulations governing the use of the baby box, such as mandating personnel at baby box locations to physically check the device at least twice daily and to test the device at least weekly to ensure that the box's alarm system is in working order. Such safety regulations would undoubtedly spur other Florida cities and towns to follow Ocala's lead, which would provide more opportunities for lives to be saved here in Florida – just as they have been in Indiana.”

Shirvell concluded, “Florida Voice for the Unborn has led the charge here in Florida to get the Baby Box Bill passed and finally enacted into law this year. With today's floor action in the Florida Senate, the Baby Box Bill has been effectively gutted. I am quite disappointed in the bill's Senate sponsor, **Senator Dennis Baxley (R—Sumter, Lake, & Marion Counties)**, who today offered the last-minute floor amendment that ruined House Bill 133. Today's incomprehensible floor action follows a similar perplexing action by Senator Baxley last Monday, April 19th, when Senate Bill 122 faced its final stop in the Appropriations Committee. During that committee hearing, Baxley likewise offered a late amendment to gut the Senate's version of the Baby Box Bill. Florida Voice for the Unborn was subsequently assured that the baby box provision would return when the Senate took-up House Bill 133 on the floor. But, shockingly, that turned out not to be the case. Florida Voice for the Unborn now calls upon Senator Baxley, who is usually a reliable pro-life champion, to provide a public explanation for the events that unfolded today. Florida Voice for the Unborn's supporters throughout Florida are rightly upset and they deserve an immediate explanation because Florida's unborn – and newborn – have been immensely let-down.”

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Florida Voice for the Unborn is a Tallahassee-based grassroots lobbying group that only focuses on pro-life issues impacting the unborn. It is strictly independent, and its work is guided by faith in God's only Son, Jesus Christ. Florida Voice for the Unborn supports all peaceful efforts by elected officials and others to end abortion and save lives. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Parler @UnbornVoiceFL – and visit our website at [FloridaVoiceForTheUnborn.com](http://FloridaVoiceForTheUnborn.com).