
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1628 (Michelle Rodriguez) - Child protection: safe surrender

Version: March 19, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: June 29, 2026

Policy Vote: JUD. 11 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Bob Franzoia

Bill Summary: AB 1628 would extend from 72 hours to 30 days of age the period of time during which a parent may surrender a child without incurring civil or criminal penalties for child abandonment. By expanding the duties of an existing program, the bill would impose a state mandated local program.

Fiscal Impact: Minor costs to the Department of Social Services (DSS) to update the statewide logo, public outreach and educational materials, training materials for safe-surrender site personnel, and modifications to the Office of Child Abuse Prevention's existing surrender-tracking and reporting infrastructure.

Minor costs to local agencies for the replacement of statewide logo signage at hospitals, fire stations, and other designated safe-surrender sites to reflect the 30-day eligibility window.

Unknown, moderate costs to county child welfare services agencies for any incremental increase in safe-surrender intake, dependency petitions, and DSS notifications resulting from the extended eligibility window. Cost magnitude depends on the extent to which the extended window increases the volume of surrenders (General Fund).

Minor workload cost pressure to the courts for any incremental dependency petitions filed in connection with surrendered children (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund).

Background: California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law was enacted in 2001 in response to a spate of high-profile cases in which newborn infants died after being abandoned in unsafe locations. To prevent unsafe abandonments by parents who are, for whatever reason, unable to care for their newborns, the Safely Surrendered Baby Law provides parents with locations where they can surrender custody of their infants aged 72 hours or younger on a "no questions asked" basis. "Safe-surrender sites" are designated by counties and local fire agencies; when a baby is surrendered at a designated site, the site's personnel are required to take specified steps, including notifying child protective services.

California is one of six states that limits the age of a child who may be safely surrendered to 72 hours of age. 21 states permit safe surrender of a child up to 30 days of age.

Proposed Law: According to the author and supporters of the bill, 72 hours is an insufficient timeframe for a parent, particularly one experiencing postpartum trauma, to determine whether a safe surrender of their child is the best option. This bill, therefore,

extends the age at which a child may be safely surrendered, to 30 days, to give parents additional time to stabilize, seek support, and make safe decisions before the window for safe surrender closes.

Staff Comments: DSS Safely Surrendered Baby data show two positive trends: The number of safety surrendered babies is increasing with 118 surrendered in 2024 and the number of abandoned surviving/deceased babies is declining.

Overall DSS 2001 to 2024, Safely Surrendered Baby Data

Reclaimed: 65

Safely Surrendered: 1,542

Total Abandoned: 202

Abandoned Surviving: 88

Abandoned Decrease: 114

The number of unsafely abandoned infants has declined substantially, from a high of 26 in 2006 to 3 in 2024.