

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

H

D

HOUSE BILL 125  
PROPOSED COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE H125-PCS10125-CK-4

Short Title: Safe Surrender Infants.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 16, 2023

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO REVISE THE LAWS PERTAINING TO THE SAFE SURRENDER OF  
3 INFANTS UNDER THE ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND DEPENDENCY LAWS AND TO  
4 MAKE CONFORMING STATUTORY CHANGES.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 SECTION 1. Chapter 7B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article  
7 to read:

8 "Article 5A.

9 "Safe Surrender of Infants.

10 **"§ 7B-520. Purpose; limitations.**

11 (a) Purpose. – The purpose of this Article is to protect newborn infants by providing a  
12 safe alternative for a parent who, in a crisis or in desperation, may physically abandon or harm  
13 his or her newborn and to provide information for the parent regarding the parent's rights and  
14 alternatives.

15 (b) Limitations. – The provisions of this Article apply exclusively to safely surrendered  
16 infants as defined in G.S. 7B-101(19a). No person or agency shall act under the provisions of  
17 this Article if it is determined that any of the following are true:

18 (1) A surrendered infant is reasonably believed to be more than seven days old.

19 (2) The infant shows signs of abuse or neglect.

20 (3) There is reason to believe the individual surrendering the infant was not the  
21 infant's parent.

22 (4) At the time the infant was surrendered, there was reason to believe the parent  
23 intended to return for the infant.

24 **"§ 7B-521. Persons to whom infant may be surrendered.**

25 The following individuals shall, without a court order, take into temporary custody an infant  
26 reasonably believed to be not more than seven days old that is voluntarily delivered to the  
27 individual by the infant's parent who does not express an intent to return for the infant:

28 (1) A health care provider, as defined under G.S. 90-21.11, who is on duty or at a  
29 hospital or at a local or district health department or at a nonprofit community  
30 health center.

31 (2) A first responder, including a law enforcement officer, a certified emergency  
32 medical services worker, or a firefighter.

33 (3) A social services worker who is on duty or at a local department of social  
34 services.

35 **"§ 7B-522. Duties of person taking safely surrendered infant into temporary custody.**



\* H 1 2 5 - P C S 1 0 1 2 5 - C K - 4 \*

1 An individual who takes an infant into temporary custody under G.S. 7B-521 shall perform  
2 any act necessary to protect the physical health and well-being of the infant and immediately  
3 notify the department of social services in the county where the infant is surrendered. The  
4 individual may inquire as to the parents' identities, the date of birth of the infant, any relevant  
5 medical history, and the parents' marital status and may advise the parent that if the parent  
6 provides that information, it may facilitate the adoption of the child. However, the individual  
7 shall notify the parent that the parent is not required to provide the information. The individual,  
8 if practical, shall provide the surrendering parent with written information created by the  
9 Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, as set forth in  
10 G.S. 7B-528.

11 **"§ 7B-523. Immunity for those receiving infant.**

12 An individual to whom an infant was surrendered under G.S. 7B-521 is immune from any  
13 civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of any omission  
14 or action taken pursuant to the requirements of this Article as long as that individual was acting  
15 in good faith. The immunity established by this section does not extend to gross negligence,  
16 wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing that would otherwise be actionable.

17 **"§ 7B-524. Confidentiality of information and records.**

18 (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, unless a parent  
19 consents to its release, an individual who takes an infant into temporary custody under this Article  
20 and any facility involved in the care of the infant at the time the infant is taken into temporary  
21 custody shall keep information regarding the surrendering parent's identity confidential.

22 (b) An individual taking an infant into temporary custody under this Article shall provide  
23 to the director of the department of social services any information known about the infant, the  
24 infant's parents, including their identity, any medical history, and the circumstances of surrender.

25 (c) All information about the surrendering parent's identity that is received or obtained  
26 by the department of social services shall not be disclosed except for (i) notice to local law  
27 enforcement pursuant to G.S. 7B-525(b)(3), (ii) contact with the non-surrendering parent, or (iii)  
28 as otherwise ordered by a court of this State.

29 (d) All information received by the department of social services related to the  
30 circumstances of the infant's safe surrender and the infant's condition shall be held in strictest  
31 confidence and shall not be disclosed except as provided in this section.

32 (1) The director may consult with and share information that the director  
33 determines is necessary or relevant to the case with (i) a health care provider  
34 that provided medical treatment to the safely surrendered infant before, at the  
35 time of, or after the safe surrender, (ii) a placement provider, including a foster  
36 care placement or pre-adoptive placement, for the infant, (iii) a court  
37 exercising jurisdiction over an adoption proceeding for the infant, and (iv) any  
38 agency that a court in an adoption proceeding requires to conduct a  
39 preplacement assessment, report to the court, or equivalent.

40 (2) A guardian ad litem appointed in a termination of parental rights proceeding  
41 resulting from the infant's safe surrender may examine and obtain written  
42 copies of the record.

43 (3) A district or superior court judge of this State presiding over a civil, criminal,  
44 or delinquency matter in which the department of social services is not a party  
45 may order the department to release confidential information after providing  
46 the department with reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard and then  
47 determining that the information is relevant and necessary to the trial of the  
48 matter before the court and unavailable from any other source. The department  
49 of social services shall surrender the requested records to the court, which  
50 shall conduct an in-camera review prior to releasing the confidential records.

1       (e) This section shall not apply if the department determines the juvenile is not a safely  
2 surrendered infant or is the victim of a crime.

3 **"§ 7B-525. Social services response.**

4       (a) A director of a department of social services who receives a safely surrendered infant  
5 pursuant to this Article has, by virtue of the surrender, the surrendering parent's rights to legal  
6 and physical custody of the infant without obtaining a court order. A county department of social  
7 services to whom an infant has been safely surrendered may apply ex parte to the district court  
8 for an order finding that the infant has been safely surrendered and confirming that the county  
9 department of social services has the surrendering parent's right to legal custody of the minor for  
10 the purposes of obtaining a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, a social security number,  
11 or federal and State benefits for the minor.

12       (b) The director of social services receiving the infant shall do the following in an  
13 expeditious manner:

14           (1) Ascertain from a health care provider that the surrendered infant is, to a  
15 reasonable medical certainty, not more than seven days old and without signs  
16 of abuse or neglect. If both conditions are not satisfied, the provisions of the  
17 Article do not apply and the director shall treat the infant as a juvenile who  
18 has been reported to be an abused, neglected, or dependent juvenile.

19           (2) Make an inquiry of the person who received the infant as a safe surrender  
20 whether the surrendering parent was provided with information in accordance  
21 with G.S. 7B-526 and document the response.

22           (3) Notify law enforcement of the safely surrendered infant and provide law  
23 enforcement with information necessary to investigate through the North  
24 Carolina Center for Missing Persons and other national and State resources  
25 whether the infant is a missing child.

26           (4) Contact the non-surrendering parent when their identity is known to inform  
27 the non-surrendering parent that the infant was surrendered.

28           (5) Respond to any inquiry by a non-surrendering parent about whether their child  
29 was safely surrendered.

30           (6) When a surrendering or non-surrendering parent seeks custody of the infant,  
31 arrange for genetic marker testing of that parent and the infant if there is  
32 uncertainty as to parentage.

33           (7) After 60 days from the date of surrender, if the surrendering parent has not  
34 sought to regain custody of the infant and the infant is not placed with the  
35 non-surrendering parent, initiate a termination of parental rights for the  
36 surrendering parent under G.S. 7B-1111(a)(7).

37       (c) If the director, at any time after receiving an infant, determines that the infant's legal  
38 residence is in another county, the director shall promptly notify the director in the county of the  
39 infant's residence, and the two directors shall coordinate efforts to ensure that appropriate actions  
40 are taken. A department of social services located in the county of legal residence of the infant  
41 that assumes custody of the infant pursuant to an appropriate action taken under this subsection  
42 shall be subject to the provisions of this Article.

43       (d) Where the non-surrendering parent's identity is known and the non-surrendering  
44 parent has been contacted and located by the director of the department of social services, the  
45 director shall place custody of the safely surrendered infant with the non-surrendering parent,  
46 and any custodial rights of the department of social services shall terminate only if all of the  
47 following apply:

48           (1) There exists the rebuttable presumption the non-surrendering parent is the  
49 safely surrendered infant's parent through (i) the child's legitimation through  
50 marriage or (ii) genetic marker testing arranged by the director to establish

1 parentage that indicates the probability of parentage is ninety-seven percent  
2 (97%) or higher.

3 (2) The non-surrendering parent asserts their parental rights to their child.

4 (3) The director does not have cause to suspect the infant is an abused, neglected,  
5 or dependent juvenile due to the circumstances created by the  
6 non-surrendering parent.

7 (e) Where the identity of the non-surrendering parent is known by the director and the  
8 director has cause to suspect the infant may be an abused, neglected, or dependent juvenile due  
9 to circumstances created by the non-surrendering parent, the director shall proceed as if there  
10 was a report of abuse, neglect, or dependency in accordance with G.S. 7B-302. The surrendering  
11 parent shall not be part of the department assessment conducted under G.S. 7B-302. If a petition  
12 alleging abuse, neglect, or dependency is filed with the district court pursuant to G.S. 7B-302, in  
13 accordance with G.S. 7B-401.1(b), the surrendering parent shall not be a party unless the court  
14 orders otherwise or a surrendering parent comes forward to regain custody of the child.

15 (f) If the surrendering parent seeks to regain custody of the infant, the provision of  
16 G.S. 7B-527(a) shall apply.

17 **"§ 7B-526. Notice by publication of the safely surrendered infant.**

18 (a) Within 14 days from the date of the safe surrender of an infant, the director shall  
19 provide notice by publication as specified in subsection (b) of this section that an infant has been  
20 surrendered and taken into custody by the department of social services.

21 (b) The notice shall be published in a newspaper qualified for legal advertising in  
22 accordance with G.S. 1-597 and G.S. 1-598 and published in the county in which the surrender  
23 was made and in any other county that the director has reason to believe either parent may be  
24 residing. The publication shall be once a week for three successive weeks. The notice shall state  
25 each of the following:

26 (1) The infant was surrendered by a person claiming to be the infant's mother or  
27 father who did not express an intent to return for the infant and that the infant  
28 was surrendered to an individual pursuant to G.S. 7B-521 by specifying (i) the  
29 profession of the individual authorized to accept the surrendered infant, (ii)  
30 the name and location of the facility at which the infant was surrendered, and  
31 (iii) the date of surrender.

32 (2) The physical characteristics of the infant at the time of surrender.

33 (3) The infant is now in the physical and legal custody of the department of social  
34 services in the county where the infant was surrendered.

35 (4) The surrendering mother or father has the right to request the infant's return to  
36 their custody by contacting the department of social services in the county that  
37 the infant was surrendered before the department initiates an action to  
38 terminate their parental rights in district court. If the surrendering parent seeks  
39 to regain custody of the infant from the department of social services, the  
40 director shall treat the infant as a juvenile who has been reported as a neglected  
41 juvenile and requires that the director conduct an assessment, at which point  
42 the surrendering parent's rights to have his or her identity be confidential no  
43 longer apply.

44 (5) The department is making efforts to identify, locate, and contact the  
45 non-surrendering parent. The non-surrendering parent has the right to contact  
46 the department of social services to inquire about and seek custody of the  
47 infant. The department may place the infant with the non-surrendering parent,  
48 terminating the department's custodial rights to the infant, when that parent's  
49 identity and location are known and there is no cause to suspect the infant is  
50 an abused, neglected, or dependent juvenile due to circumstances created by  
51 the non-surrendering parent.

1           (6)    Each parent has the right to contact the department of social services in the  
2           county where the infant was surrendered.

3           (7)    If neither parent seeks the infant's custody from the department of social  
4           services or executes a relinquishment for adoption within 60 days of the date  
5           of the surrender, which shall be stated clearly on the notice, the department  
6           will initiate a court action to terminate both parents' parental rights. Unless the  
7           court orders otherwise, the notice of the petition to terminate parental rights  
8           will be published in the same newspaper with the court name "In re Baby  
9           Doe."

10          (8)    How to contact the department of social services about the safely surrendered  
11          infant and the parents' rights.

12          (c)    If a termination of parental rights for the safely surrendered infant is commenced, an  
13          affidavit of the publisher of the notice by this section shall be filed with the court at the  
14          preliminary hearing required by G.S. 7B-1105.1.

15          **"§ 7B-527. Rights of surrendering parent.**

16          (a)    Right to Regain Custody. – Prior to the filing of a termination of parental rights  
17          petition under Article 11 of this Subchapter, a surrendering parent has the right to contact the  
18          county department of social services where the infant was surrendered and request the infant's  
19          return to his or her custody. The director shall treat any such request as a report of neglect and  
20          comply with the provisions of G.S. 7B-302.

21          (b)    Right of Relinquishment. – The safe surrender of an infant under this Article does not  
22          preclude the surrendering parent from executing a relinquishment of their parental rights for  
23          adoption with the local department of social services which received the safely surrendered  
24          infant.

25          (c)    Immunity. – A parent surrendering an infant pursuant to this Article is immune from  
26          any civil liability or criminal prosecution in accordance with G.S. 14-322.3 as long as the  
27          surrendering parent was acting in good faith. The immunity established by this section does not  
28          extend to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing that would otherwise be  
29          actionable.

30          **"§ 7B-528. Information to surrendering parent.**

31          (a)    The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, shall  
32          create printable and downloadable information about infant safe surrender and the rights of the  
33          parents. The information shall be written in a user-friendly manner and translated to commonly  
34          spoken and read languages in this State. The Division shall post the information on its website  
35          and make the information available for distribution to agencies where persons identified in  
36          G.S. 7B-521 are on duty and to other agencies that request the information.

37          (b)    The information shall explain each of the following:

38               (1)    Who is a safely surrendered infant, surrendering parent, and non-surrendering  
39               parent.

40               (2)    The requirements for how a safe surrender of an infant may occur under this  
41               Article.

42               (3)    The right to have the surrendering parent's identity remain confidential with  
43               the exception of communicating with the non-surrendering parent, known  
44               medical providers who provided treatment to the infant prior to the safe  
45               surrender, law enforcement for purposes of a missing child assessment, or a  
46               court order.

47               (4)    The information set forth in G.S. 7B-526(b)(3) through (8).

48               (5)    That the information contains a relevant medical history form for the infant  
49               that would assist the department of social services in obtaining any necessary  
50               medical services for the infant and in facilitating the infant's placement,  
51               including adoption. Completing the form is optional.

(6) An explanation that services may be available to the surrendering parent and infant accompanied by contact information for the local department of social services.

(c) The Division shall create a printable and downloadable medical history form as referred to in subsection (b) of this section, and the form must include instructions on how to complete it and where to return it."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 7B-101 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 7B-101. Definitions.**

As used in this Subchapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the following words have the listed meanings:

...

- (15) Neglected juvenile. – Any juvenile less than 18 years of age (i) who is found to be a minor victim of human trafficking under G.S. 14-43.15 or (ii) whose parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker does any of the following:
  - a. Does not provide proper care, supervision, or discipline.
  - b. Has abandoned the ~~juvenile~~-juvenile, except where that juvenile is a safely surrendered infant as defined in this Subchapter.
  - c. Has not provided or arranged for the provision of necessary medical or remedial care.
  - d. Or whose parent, guardian, or custodian has refused to follow the recommendations of the Juvenile and Family Team made pursuant to Article 27A of this Chapter.
  - e. Creates or allows to be created a living environment that is injurious to the juvenile's welfare.
  - f. Has participated or attempted to participate in the unlawful transfer of custody of the juvenile under ~~G.S. 14-321.2~~-G.S. 14-321.2.
  - g. Has placed the juvenile for care or adoption in violation of law.

...

(15b) Non-surrendering parent. – A parent of a safely surrendered infant other than the parent who physically surrenders the parent's infant pursuant to Article 5A of this Subchapter.

...

(19a) Safely surrendered infant. – An infant reasonably believed to be not more than seven days old and without signs of abuse or neglect who is voluntarily delivered to an individual in accordance with Article 5A of this Subchapter by the infant's parent who does not express an intent to return for the infant. In determining whether there are signs of neglect, the act of surrendering the infant, in and of itself, does not constitute neglect.

~~(19a)~~(19b) Serious neglect. – Conduct, behavior, or inaction of the juvenile's parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker that evidences a disregard of consequences of such magnitude that the conduct, behavior, or inaction constitutes an unequivocal danger to the juvenile's health, welfare, or safety, but does not constitute abuse.

...

(21a) Surrendering parent. – A parent who physically surrenders the parent's infant pursuant to Article 5A of this Subchapter.

...."

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 7B-401.1(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) Parents. – The juvenile's parent shall be a party unless one of the following applies:

...

1           (2)    The parent has relinquished the juvenile for adoption, or safely surrendered  
2           the infant and has not sought the return of the infant prior to the filing of a  
3           termination of parental rights, unless the court orders that the parent be made  
4           a party.

5           ...."

6           **SECTION 4.** G.S. 7B-500 reads as rewritten:

7           **"§ 7B-500. Taking a juvenile into temporary custody; civil and criminal immunity.**

8           (a)    Temporary custody means the taking of physical custody and providing personal care  
9           and supervision until a court order for nonsecure custody can be obtained. A juvenile may be  
10          taken into temporary custody without a court order by a law enforcement officer or a department  
11          of social services worker if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the juvenile is abused,  
12          neglected, or dependent and that the juvenile would be injured or could not be taken into custody  
13          if it were first necessary to obtain a court order. If a department of social services worker takes a  
14          juvenile into temporary custody under this section, the worker may arrange for the placement,  
15          care, supervision, and transportation of the juvenile.

16          (b)    ~~The following individuals shall, without a court order, take into temporary custody~~  
17          ~~an infant under seven days of age that is voluntarily delivered to the individual by the infant's~~  
18          ~~parent who does not express an intent to return for the infant:~~

19               (1)    ~~A health care provider, as defined under G.S. 90-21.11, who is on duty or at a~~  
20               ~~hospital or at a local or district health department or at a nonprofit community~~  
21               ~~health center.~~

22               (2)    ~~A law enforcement officer who is on duty or at a police station or sheriff's~~  
23               ~~department.~~

24               (3)    ~~A social services worker who is on duty or at a local department of social~~  
25               ~~services.~~

26               (4)    ~~A certified emergency medical service worker who is on duty or at a fire or~~  
27               ~~emergency medical services station.~~

28          The process for taking into temporary custody a safely surrendered infant is as provided under  
29          Article 5A of this Subchapter.

30          (c)    ~~An individual who takes an infant into temporary custody under subsection (b) of this~~  
31          ~~section shall perform any act necessary to protect the physical health and well-being of the infant~~  
32          ~~and shall immediately notify the department of social services or a local law enforcement agency.~~  
33          ~~Any individual who takes an infant into temporary custody under subsection (b) of this section~~  
34          ~~may inquire as to the parents' identities and as to any relevant medical history, but the parent is~~  
35          ~~not required to provide the information. The individual shall notify the parent that the parent is~~  
36          ~~not required to provide the information.~~

37          (d)    ~~Any adult may, without a court order, take into temporary custody an infant under~~  
38          ~~seven days of age that is voluntarily delivered to the individual by the infant's parent who does~~  
39          ~~not express an intent to return for the infant. Any individual who takes an infant into temporary~~  
40          ~~custody under this section shall perform any act necessary to protect the physical health and~~  
41          ~~well-being of the infant and shall immediately notify the department of social services or a local~~  
42          ~~law enforcement agency. An individual who takes an infant into temporary custody under this~~  
43          ~~subsection may inquire as to the parents' identities and as to any relevant medical history, but the~~  
44          ~~parent is not required to provide the information. The individual shall notify the parent that the~~  
45          ~~parent is not required to provide the information.~~

46          (e)    ~~An individual described in subsection (b) or (d) of this section is immune from any~~  
47          ~~civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of any omission~~  
48          ~~or action taken pursuant to the requirements of subsection (c) or (d) of this section as long as that~~  
49          ~~individual was acting in good faith. The immunity established by this subsection does not extend~~  
50          ~~to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing that would otherwise be~~  
51          ~~actionable."~~

1           **SECTION 5.** G.S. 7B-501(a) reads as rewritten:

2           "(a) A person who takes a juvenile into custody without a court order under G.S. 7B-500  
3 shall proceed as follows: follows, except that the person shall proceed in accordance with  
4 G.S. 7B-522 for a safely surrendered infant:

5           ...."

6           **SECTION 6.** Article 11 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes is amended by adding  
7 a new section to read:

8           "**§ 7B-1105.1. Preliminary hearing; safely surrendered infant.**

9           (a) Within 10 days from the date of filing of a petition to terminate the parental rights of  
10 a surrendering or non-surrendering parent of a safely surrendered infant, or during the next term  
11 of court in the county where the petition is filed if there is no court in the county in that 10-day  
12 period, the court shall conduct a preliminary hearing to address the infant's safe surrender. The  
13 preliminary hearing shall be recorded and shall be closed unless the surrendering parent appears  
14 and requests that it be open. The purpose of the hearing shall be to ascertain the circumstances  
15 of the safe surrender in order to determine any efforts that should be made to ascertain the identity  
16 and location of either parent and to establish appropriate notice regarding termination of parental  
17 rights proceedings.

18           (b) The court shall inquire of the director of the department of social services as to all of  
19 the following:

20                   (1) The circumstances of the safe surrender.

21                   (2) Whether, at the time of surrender, the surrendering parent was provided the  
22 information pursuant to G.S. 7B-528.

23                   (3) Whether notice of a safe surrender was made by publication as required by  
24 G.S. 7B-526. An affidavit of the publisher of that notice shall be filed with the  
25 court at this preliminary hearing.

26                   (4) Whether either parent has made any efforts to contact the department of social  
27 services and the nature of those contacts.

28                   (5) Whether the identities or locations of either parent are known to the director  
29 of the department of social services.

30           (c) The court shall determine whether any diligent efforts are required to identify or  
31 locate the surrendering parent considering the need to protect the confidentiality of that parent's  
32 identity and the parent's due process rights. The court may specify the type of diligent efforts the  
33 department of social services is required to take. The court shall determine whether the  
34 surrendering parent shall be served pursuant to Rule 4 of the Rules of Civil Procedure, and if so,  
35 may specify the type of service that must be provided in lieu of Rule 4 whether the parent shall  
36 be served by publication in accordance with subsection (e) of this section.

37           (d) When the identity of the non-surrendering parent is known, the court shall order  
38 service pursuant to Rule 4 of the Rules of Civil Procedure. When the non-surrendering parent's  
39 identity is not known, service shall be by publication in accordance with subsection (e) of this  
40 section.

41           (e) The court shall specifically order the place or places of publication and the contents  
42 of the notice that the court concludes is most likely to identify the infant to either of the infant's  
43 parents without including the name of the surrendering parent. The notice shall be published in  
44 a newspaper qualified for legal advertising in accordance with G.S. 1-597 and G.S. 1-598 and  
45 published in the counties directed by the court, including in the county where the local department  
46 of social services that received the safely surrendered infant is located and where the parent is  
47 residing, if known, once a week for three successive weeks. The notice shall do each of the  
48 following:

49                   (1) Designate the court in which the petition is pending.

50                   (2) Be directed to "the mother (father) (mother and father) of a male (female)  
51 infant born on or about \_\_\_\_\_ and if known in



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(date)

(hospital or health care facility where the infant was born.)

(County),

(City),

, respondent."

(State)

- (3) Designate the docket number and title of the case which shall be "In re Baby Doe."
- (4) State that the infant was surrendered by a person claiming to be the infant's mother or father who did not express an intent to return for the infant and that the infant was surrendered to an individual pursuant to G.S. 7B-521 by specifying (i) the profession of the person authorized to accept the surrendered infant, (ii) the facility at which the infant was surrendered, and (iii) the date of surrender.
- (5) State the physical characteristics of the infant at the time of the surrender.
- (6) State that a petition seeking to terminate the parental rights of the respondent has been filed and the purpose of the termination hearing.
- (7) Notice that if the parent is indigent, the parent is entitled to appointed counsel and may contact the clerk immediately to request counsel.
- (8) State the date and time of the pretrial hearing pursuant to G.S. 7B-1108.1 and notice that the parent may attend the hearing.
- (9) Direct the respondent to file with the clerk a written answer to the petition within 30 days after a date stated in the notice, exclusive of such date, which date so stated shall be the date of first publication of notice and be substantially in the form as set forth in G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4(j1).
- (10) State that if the parent fails to answer the petition within the time prescribed and the court determines the ground for termination has been proved and that termination of that parent's rights is in the best interests of the infant, the respondent's parental rights to the infant will be terminated.

Upon completion of the service by publication, an affidavit of the publisher shall be filed with the court.

(f) The court shall issue the order required by this section within 30 days from the date of the preliminary hearing unless the court shall determine that additional time for investigation is required.

(g) No summons is required for a parent who is served by publication."

**SECTION 7.** G.S. 7B-1111(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) The court may terminate the parental rights upon a finding of one or more of the following:

- ...
- (7) The parent has willfully abandoned the juvenile for at least six consecutive months immediately preceding the filing of the petition or motion, or the parent has voluntarily abandoned an infant as a safely surrendered infant pursuant to ~~G.S. 7B-500~~ Article 5A of this Subchapter for at least 60 consecutive days immediately preceding the filing of the petition or motion.
- ...
- (9) The parental rights of the parent with respect to another child of the parent have been terminated involuntarily by a court of competent jurisdiction and the parent lacks the ability or willingness to establish a safe home. This ground shall not apply to a parent whose parental rights were terminated as a result of the other child being a safely surrendered infant.

...."

1           **SECTION 8.** G.S. 14-318.2 reads as rewritten:

2   "**§ 14-318.2. Child abuse a misdemeanor.**

3       ...

4       (c)   A parent who abandons an infant ~~less than seven days of age~~ not more than seven  
5 days old pursuant to G.S. 14-322.3 shall not be prosecuted under this section for any acts or  
6 omissions related to the care of that infant."

7           **SECTION 9.** G.S. 14-318.4 reads as rewritten:

8   "**§ 14-318.4. Child abuse a felony.**

9       ...

10       (c)   Abandonment of an infant ~~less than seven days of age~~ not more than seven days old  
11 pursuant to G.S. 14-322.3 may be treated as a mitigating factor in sentencing for a conviction  
12 under this section involving that infant.

13       ...."

14           **SECTION 10.** G.S. 14-322.3 reads as rewritten:

15   "**§ 14-322.3. Abandonment of an infant ~~under seven days of age~~ not more than seven days**  
16 **old.**

17       When a parent abandons an infant ~~less than seven days of age~~ not more than seven days old  
18 by voluntarily delivering the infant as provided in ~~G.S. 7B-500(b) or G.S. 7B-500(d)~~ Article 5A  
19 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes and does not express an intent to return for the infant, that  
20 parent shall not be prosecuted under G.S. 14-322, 14-322.1, or 14-43.14."

21           **SECTION 11.** G.S. 115C-47(52) reads as rewritten:

22   "**§ 115C-47. Powers and duties generally.**

23       In addition to the powers and duties designated in G.S. 115C-36, local boards of education  
24 shall have the power or duty:

25       ...

26       (52)   To Ensure That Certain Students Receive Information Annually on Lawfully  
27 Abandoning a Newborn Baby. – Not later than August 1, 2008, local boards  
28 of education shall adopt policies to ensure that students in grades nine through  
29 12 receive information annually on the manner in which a parent may lawfully  
30 abandon a newborn baby with a responsible person, in accordance with  
31 G.S. 7B-500.Article 5A of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes."

32           **SECTION 12.** G.S. 115C-218.75(a) reads as rewritten:

33       "(a)   Health and Safety Standards. – A charter school shall meet the same health and safety  
34 requirements required of a local school administrative unit. The Department of Public Instruction  
35 shall ensure that charter schools provide parents and guardians with information about  
36 meningococcal meningitis and influenza and their vaccines at the beginning of every school year.  
37 This information shall include the causes, symptoms, and how meningococcal meningitis and  
38 influenza are spread and the places where parents and guardians may obtain additional  
39 information and vaccinations for their children.

40       ...

41       The Department of Public Instruction shall also ensure that charter schools provide students  
42 in grades nine through 12 with information annually on the manner in which a parent may  
43 lawfully abandon a newborn baby with a responsible person, in accordance with  
44 G.S. 7B-500.Article 5A of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes.

45       ...."

46           **SECTION 13.** G.S. 115C-548 reads as rewritten:

47   "**§ 115C-548. Attendance; health and safety regulations.**

48       ...

49       The Division of Nonpublic Education, Department of Administration, shall also ensure that  
50 information is available to these schools so that they can provide information on the manner in

1 which a parent may lawfully abandon a newborn baby with a responsible person, in accordance  
2 with ~~G.S. 7B-500~~Article 5A of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes."

3 **SECTION 14.** G.S. 115C-556 reads as rewritten:

4 "**§ 115C-556. Attendance; health and safety regulations.**

5 ...

6 The Division of Nonpublic Education, Department of Administration, shall also ensure that  
7 information is available to each qualified nonpublic school so that the school can provide  
8 information on the manner in which a parent may lawfully abandon a newborn baby with a  
9 responsible person, in accordance with ~~G.S. 7B-500~~Article 5A of Chapter 7B of the General  
10 Statutes."

11 **SECTION 15.** G.S. 115C-565 reads as rewritten:

12 "**§ 115C-565. Requirements exclusive.**

13 ...

14 The Division of Nonpublic Education, Department of Administration, shall also provide to  
15 home schools information on the manner in which a parent may lawfully abandon a newborn  
16 baby with a responsible person, in accordance with ~~G.S. 7B-500~~Article 5A of Chapter 7B of  
17 the General Statutes. This information may be provided electronically or on the Division's Web  
18 page."

19 **SECTION 16.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2023.