



HOUSE BILL 139: Baby Boxes/Newborn Safety Device.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House Judiciary 2. If favorable, re-refer to Health. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	April 15, 2025
Introduced by:	Reps. Balkcom, Pickett, Potts, Ward	Prepared by:	Debbie Griffiths
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H139-CSCI-16		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *The Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) for House Bill 139 would do the following:*

- *Expand the infant safe surrender laws to allow the safe surrender of infants by utilizing a newborn safety device.*
- *Require that the newborn safety device meet certain safety requirements, limit the locations where the devices can be installed, and undergo an initial and annual inspections by the Department of Health and Human Service, Division of Social Services.*
- *Make conforming changes to the safe surrender statutes.*

CURRENT LAW: North Carolina currently allows infants to be safely surrendered only to certain health care providers, first responders, and social services workers.

BILL ANALYSIS: The PCS for House Bill 139 would allow a parent who does not express an intent to return for the infant to safely surrender their infant who is less than 30 days old and who does not have signs of abuse or neglect by utilizing a newborn safety device.

A qualified establishment would be defined as a physical building of an emergency department, fire department, or a rescue or emergency medical services squad that has onsite staffing 24 hours per day by an emergency technician or other emergency medical health care provider.

A qualified establishment may install a newborn safety device that has each of the following:

- A temperature-controlled interior.
- Proper ventilation.
- An exterior door that locks automatically upon placement of the infant in the safety device.
- Attached to the exterior of the qualified establishment in an area that is conspicuous and visible to employees and that has a door to access the infant from the interior of the building.
- Have an adequate dual alarm system connected to the physical location of the newborn safety device that sounds when an infant is placed in the device and that automatically calls 911.

The qualified establishment must comply with each of the following:

- Cover the cost through departmental funding or private donations.
- Test the dual alarm system weekly.

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- Visually inspect the device a minimum of two times per day.
- Develop an emergency plan.
- Provide information regarding resources and the parent's rights on or near the newborn safety device.

The newborn safety device would have to pass an initial inspection by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (the Division) and an annual inspection by the Division thereafter.

Conforming changes would be made to the existing safe surrender statutes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The act would become effective when it becomes law.