



March 31, 2026

The Honorable Nick Schultz, Chair
Assembly Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 126
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1628 (Michelle Rodriguez) Child protection: safe surrender – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Schultz and Honorable Members of the Assembly Public Safety Committee,

The California Catholic Conference **supports AB 1628 (Michelle Rodriguez)** as amended on 3/19/26. This bill extends the safe surrender deadline for parents from 72 hours to 30 days after birth.

1542 infants have been safely surrendered in California since 2001, while 202 unsafe abandonments have taken place in that time. Of those abandonments, about half of infants survived, emphasizing the lifesaving nature of safe haven laws.

Many of these moms face crisis situations such as trauma from abuse or trafficking, substance use, or post-partum mental health challenges. Surrendering parents are given a health questionnaire, matching bracelet with their baby, offered support, and have **14 days for reunification following the surrender. This accompaniment and warm-handoff to services is a critical component of the safe haven law.**

Evidence from other states shows that, while rare, some mothers do surrender in the expanded time frame, offering them an additional safety net. The rarity of need is encouraging, helping to balance the rights of the child for permanency and attachment to biological family with the child's right to safety. Expanding safe surrender from the current 72 hours to 30 days is recommended as best practice by the National Safe Haven Alliance, is congruous with most nearby states, and has capacity to save lives.

For 2000 years, Catholic Church has advocated for the protection of infants and affirmed a culture that protects the dignity of every human person. This bill will protect infants and ensures parents, especially mothers, receive the supportive services they need in crisis.

The California Catholic community is 12 million strong, and we are the largest private nonprofit provider of healthcare, education, and social services for the common good in our state. The Conference advocates for the dignity of every human person and policies that help cultivate strong, healthy families.

For these reasons, as the official public policy voice for the Catholic Church of California, we request that you vote **"AYE" on AB 1628**. Should you have any questions regarding our position please contact Molly Sheahan, Associate Director for Healthy Families at 916.313.4019 or msheahan@cacatholic.org.

Sincerely yours,

Kathleen Domingo
Executive Director

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