

408 EAST WHITMAN  
POCATELLO, ID 83201



208.234.6201  
FAX: 208.233.4043

DAVID G. GATES - FIRE CHIEF

March 2, 2017



Representative Lee Heider  
Health & Welfare Committee  
Idaho Senate

Cc/ Senate - Health & Welfare Committee

### ***Safe Haven Amendment SB1126***

**Chairman Heider,**

I would like to express the Pocatello Fire Department's strong support of the proposed amendment to include fire stations in the Safe Haven legislation.

Currently the definition of "Safe haven" includes hospitals, physicians and their staff, advanced practice nurses, physician assistants, and medical personnel when making an emergency response to a "911" call from a custodial parent. The addition of fire stations to the definition would be beneficial to those who are in need of this statute.

Fire stations are staffed with personnel who are trained to act in an emergency and should be trusted to assist parents who would like to safely relinquish their newborn infant to a safe place. There are numerous fire departments across state that could provide a safe alternative to child abandonment.

I would also like to express a concern I have with another part of the statute, but I do not want, in any way, to derail the current amendment. Within the definition, EMS providers are defined as Safe Haven "medical personnel when making an emergency response to a "911" call from a custodial parent..." and that has caused issues recently when trying to implement Safe Haven in our jurisdiction. It is not uncommon for fire and EMS services to respond to citizens who have walked into the fire station, flagged down a responder to request aid, or have stopped to assist a person in obvious trouble. The fire or EMS services are then initiating the response and not responding to a 911 call. EMS providers should be empowered to act a Safe Haven in any circumstance. Our legal counsel is stating the "Safe haven" language is clear and there is no room for interpretation; the response must be initiated by a 911 call. The language "when making an emergency response to a "911" call from a custodial parent" is unduly limiting to



EMS personnel. If the process would allow, I would like to ask that an additional change be considered. I would like to propose changing “Medical personnel when making an emergency response to a "911" call from a custodial parent...” to Medical personnel acting/serving in the capacity as a licensed provider, affiliated with a recognized Idaho EMS agency. This change would be intended to provide additional opportunities for EMS providers to assist an infant in need.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Gates".

David G. Gates – MBA/EFO  
Fire Chief - Pocatello Fire Department

