



## KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

### Signature Report

April 1, 2014

Motion 14104

Proposed No. 2014-0125.2

Sponsors Dunn and Lambert

1 A MOTION to create a safety of newborn children task

2 force for King County.

3 WHEREAS, all newborn children deserve the opportunity to live and thrive as  
4 human beings, and

5 WHEREAS, a newborn child is most vulnerable within the first few hours of its  
6 life, and

7 WHEREAS, RCW 13.34.360 allows a parent within seventy-two hours of a  
8 child's birth to transfer his or her newborn to a qualified person at a hospital, fire station  
9 or federally designated rural health clinic and do so anonymously without fear of criminal  
10 prosecution for abandoning, or failing to support, the newborn, and

11 WHEREAS, the safety of newborn children law has been in effect in Washington  
12 state since 2002, and

13 WHEREAS, it is clear that the need exists to educate the public, including parents  
14 and would-be parents, on the existence of this law and identify locations where infants  
15 may be safely surrendered, and

16 WHEREAS, on February 12, 2014, the body of an infant was found near the side  
17 of a road in North Bend wrapped in a blanket with its umbilical cord attached, and

18 WHEREAS, a hospital where newborns can be safely surrendered was less than  
19 half a mile from where the baby was found, and

20 WHEREAS, the Washington state Department of Social and Health Services  
21 collects information concerning newborns transferred under the safety of newborn  
22 children law; however, data on newborns transferred in King County is not routinely  
23 provided to the county, and

24 WHEREAS, King County, as a deliverer of public services to pregnant mothers  
25 and parents of newborn children, has the ability to be a leader in effectuating better  
26 awareness and utilization of the safety of newborn children law, and

27 WHEREAS, Los Angeles county convened a safe haven task force that developed  
28 recommendations including suggestions for legislation improvements, potential safe  
29 haven site expansions, a public information campaign, standardized training modules and  
30 materials for providers to improve awareness and usage of California's safely surrendered  
31 baby law, serving as a model for other jurisdictions;

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

33 A. The executive is requested to convene a safety of newborn children task force  
34 for King County by April 30, 2014.

35 B. The purpose of the task force is to provide a report with recommendations to  
36 the King County council and executive on at least the following:

37 1. How King County can engage in an ongoing, regionally consistent public  
38 information campaign, utilizing county service intersection points such as public health,  
39 school clinics and the criminal justice system to educate service providers and the public  
40 about safe surrender of newborns. The report should include recommendations on  
41 messaging strategies, web-based information, brochures, or educational materials

designed for general use as well as for responding in the event of a newborn abandonment incident;

2. How King County can work collaboratively with the state to obtain useful, timely data on instances of safe surrender and newborn abandonment; and

3. Whether the safe surrender locations for accepting newborns should be expanded through state legislation to include public health or community clinics or other entities.

C. The report and a motion acknowledging receipt of the report shall be filed with the clerk of the council by October 30, 2014, who shall forward an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the executive and the lead staff of the law justice health and human services committee.

D. The task force that the executive is requested to convene should include representatives from the following:

1. The executive;
2. The council;
3. Public health - Seattle & King County emergency medical services division;
4. Public health - Seattle & King County community health services division;
5. The department of community and human services;
6. The department of adult and juvenile detention;
7. The department of public defense;
8. The prosecuting attorney's office;
9. District court;
10. Superior court; and

65           11. The sheriff's office.

66           E. The executive should also invite representatives from the following entities to  
67 participate in the task force:

68           1. The board of health;

69           2. The Sound Cities Association;

70           3. The city of Seattle;

71           4. The King County Fire Chiefs Association;

72           5. The King County Women's Advisory Board;

73           6. A nongovernmental entity with expertise related to safe surrender, such as the  
74 nonprofit Safe Place for Newborns of Washington;

75           7. The Community Health Council;

76           8. UW Medicine;

77           9. Harborview Medical Center;

78           10. The Washington State Hospital Association; and

79           11. The state of Washington Department of Social and Health Services.

80           F. The executive, in consultation with the council, may add additional members  
81 to the task force as appropriate.

82           G. The task force is an advisory body and has no policy or rulemaking authority.

83 Any hearings held or public comment taken will be at the option of the task force but in  
84 no event be viewed to be on behalf of the council.  
85


Motion 14104 was introduced on 3/24/2014 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 3/31/2014, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague,  
Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski and Mr.  
Upthegrove  
No: 0  
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
FOR: Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:

  
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Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** None