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## Senator David Gallegos (R) and Senator Leo Jaramillo (D) Introduce “Baby Box” Legislation

*Bipartisan revision to Safe Haven Act would allow for infants to be legally surrendered anonymously in secure “Baby Box”*

SANTA FE – **Senator David Gallegos** (R-Lea and Eddy) and **Senator Leo Jaramillo** (D-Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, And Santa Fe) today introduced bipartisan legislation amending the Safe Haven Act to allow for the installation of baby boxes in all 33 counties. A baby box, as used around the country, is a safety drawer at a firehouse where an infant can be surrendered safely and anonymously for any reason. The boxes are equipped with ventilation and heat regulation, and a silent alarm to alert the rescue team. As it stands currently, the use of baby boxes is not permitted in New Mexico under the Safe Haven Act which specifies that infants can only be surrendered to a healthcare provider, law enforcement officer, or first responder within 90 days of birth to remove liability of abandonment from the parent.

“We have been at the tip of the spear of this issue in the Española Valley,” said Senator Jaramillo. “For years, our city leaders, legislative representatives, and the President of the Española Firefighters Union (IAFF 4339) have been advocating for these devices to save the lives of infants who are born to scared parents with limited options. This legislation will allow my community and communities around the state to install these life saving devices and avoid the next tragedy.”

“We experienced the gut-wrenching reality of what this law can mean to save lives in New Mexico just a few weeks ago in Hobbs,” said Senator Gallegos. “We were fortunate that baby Saul Israel Astorga who was thrown in the dumpster is alive, but we need to do more to ensure this never happens again. We need to educate our children and youth that there is another way. Baby boxes offer another option to allow for infants to be surrendered safely without the guilt of a personal contact with a law enforcement officer or medical provider. If this bill can save just one life, it will be worth every dollar invested in this project.”

The boxes stand to cost the state about \$30,000 per installation. This bill appropriates funds for the instillation of one per county.

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