



## NCFA Media Advisory

### Alaska, Nebraska Become 49th and 50th States to Enact Safe Haven Laws

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **All Fifty States Now Offer Option of Confidential Safe Haven Relinquishment for the Protection of At-risk Infants**

February 20, 2008, Alexandria, VA – On January 19, the Alaska State Senate passed House Bill 29, also known as the Safe Haven for Infants Bill. The legislation allows for the safe surrender of infants under 21 days old at designated Safe Haven locations throughout the state. Alaska Governor Sarah Palin signed the bill on February 11.

On February 7, the Nebraska legislature passed its own Safe Haven bill, LB 157, making it the fiftieth and final state to enact this important child welfare safeguard since Texas passed the nation's first Safe Haven law in 1999. Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman signed the bill into law on February 13.

"By offering the option of safe havens to desperate parents without fear of prosecution or loss of confidentiality, Safe Haven policies provide a safe, non-threatening alternative to illegal newborn abandonment or infanticide, allowing relinquished children to be adopted into loving, permanent families," says Thomas Atwood, president and CEO of the National Council For Adoption and founding president of the National Safe Haven Alliance Board of Directors.

It is estimated that more than 1,000 newborns have been placed safely under similar laws across the country, and this number includes only the documented

cases in 33 states. The National Council For Adoption applauds Alaska and Nebraska for becoming the final two states to pass Safe Haven legislation for the protection of infants and their birthparents.

Atwood continues, "This leaves only the District of Columbia without a Safe Haven law. Child welfare advocates must work diligently to educate policymakers in Washington, D.C. about the importance of Safe Haven policies."

For more information about Safe Haven laws, visit the National Safe Haven Alliance Web site at [www.nationalsafehavenalliance.org](http://www.nationalsafehavenalliance.org).

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