

My journey to learning about the Safe Haven Law encompasses my whole life. Safe Haven Law Baby #31 is the way I safely came into the world at Westlake Hospital in Melrose Park, IL in February 2007. My birth mother went to the hospital to deliver me, then left without signing away her rights, which led to a late-night phone call from a crisis line to The Baby Fold in Bloomington IL. From there, my adoptive parents set into motion a foster care pick up and began pushing forward toward legal adoption of me, Baby #31. I was legally adopted on July 23, 2007. I have always felt loved and being adopted has always made me feel special. My adoptive parents chose my middle name, Spencer, as a nod to my birth mom. A way to keep her sacrifice ever present in my life.

I knew from a very young age that I was adopted but my adoptive parents waited until I was older to explain Safe Haven to me. Safe Haven has provided me with a loving family who has supported me in all of my endeavors allowing me to grow and do what I love such as singing and wrestling. The Safe Haven Law is plain and simple to me: it saves lives and gives babies an opportunity for a better life. I am very thankful for the Safe Haven Law and what it did to create my family.

My story doesn't end there. I never thought I would get to meet my birth mom, but life had different plans for me. In 2018, I was able to meet her for the first time. Over the last several years, I have been able to visit with her many times per year, and she continues to play a very important role in my life. How lucky am I to have multiple families to love me?

My journey led me to an idea of how to raise awareness of the Safe Haven Law. I believe you need an annual spokesperson. Someone willing to give their time and energy to show the value of taking babies to places of safety such as hospitals, just as I was. Someone willing to talk about the dangers of abandonment. Someone willing to be the 'face' of the Safe Haven Law. Someone willing to speak to the various groups who are most likely to need to utilize the Safe Haven Law.

It would be an honor to be chosen for the Morgan Jayne Hill scholarship, but more importantly, for me to be chosen as the annual Safe Haven Law spokesperson. It would be a way for me to give back, since the Safe Haven Law protected my life and has given me opportunities I wouldn't have had otherwise.