

The Safe Haven Law can only protect infants if the people who need it most know it exists. For young people, awareness of the Safe Haven Law before a crisis can be the difference between safety and danger.

Through my involvement in National Alzheimer's Buddies, an organization providing care for people suffering from neurodegenerative diseases, I've seen how building communities can make people feel seen, which is exactly the lesson I wish to bring to the Safe Haven Law.

First, I would train student ambassadors on high school and college campuses who can speak honestly about the law and available resources. Ambassadors could run lunchtime forums, class presentations, and collaborate with administration to plan events. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, ambassadors would cooperate with counselors and health agencies to provide immediate support in crises.

When young people understand their options, they can choose the best one. My experience in Model United Nations taught me how to communicate important policies clearly and responsibly to diverse audiences, and I'd like to apply these skills towards the Safe Haven Law as well. That's why creating accessible materials, such as social media advertisements, infographics, and presentations can help explain the motives behind the Safe Haven Law and reduce shame and misinformation, which lead to unsafe abandonments.

When young people know that their community supports them, they are far more likely to seek help rather than make rash decisions. When young people don't know the Safe Haven Law exists, they may feel forced to make decisions which lead to unsafe conditions for their baby. Awareness of the Safe Haven Law can turn fear into opportunities for community growth and safety, protecting infants while providing parents with a safe option devoid of judgement.

Personally, the existence of the Safe Haven Law represents community. Through my experiences with Alzheimer's Buddies, I've learned that having a caring community can transform how we face challenges. Through our respite care initiatives, I've seen firsthand how communities can band together to help their own. Families come together, friends congregate, and people pitch in. Alzheimer's Buddies is successful because they build a supportive community to make a difference in a patient's life. In the same way, the Safe Haven Law demonstrates a community taking initiative for its most vulnerable members. The law has also shaped my understanding of responsibility, strengthening my belief in proactive community care. It taught me that every member of the community has a responsibility in preventing harm and promoting safety.

Ultimately, raising awareness of the Safe Haven Law is essential to build a supportive community around vulnerable parents. Fostering a culture of empathy, trust, and support lets young people act with knowledge and courage, ensuring no one has to make a dangerous choice alone. For me, this law embodies the traits of communities I want to be a part of: communities that value life, support the vulnerable, and recognize that empathy and responsibility are most meaningful when they are shared.