

News and Current Events :: Father leaves nine children at Nebraska hospital

Father leaves nine children at Nebraska hospital - posted by ilive4only1 (), on: 2008/9/27 2:06

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Parents are abandoning teenagers at Nebraska hospitals, in a case of a well intentioned law inspiring unintended results

<http://newsblogs.chicagotribune.com/triage/2008/09/father-leaves-n.html>

"Over the last two weeks, moms or dads have dropped off seven teens at hospitals in the Cornhusker state, indicating they didn't want to care for them any more.

"They were tired of their parenting role," according to Todd Landry of Nebraska's Department of Human and Human Services, quoted in USA Today.

Under a newly implemented law, Nebraska is the only state in the nation to allow parents to leave children of any age at hospitals and request they be taken care of, USA Today notes. So-called "safe haven laws" in other states were designed to protect babies and infants from parental abandonment.

The most eye-popping case in Nebraska occurred Wednesday, when a 34-year-old father deposited nine children ages 1 to 17 at Creighton University Medical Center -- and then walked away.

The mother died a year and a half ago after a cerebral hemorrhage. The father, Gary Staton, told KETV-TV, a local station, "I was with her for 17 years, and then she was gone. What was I going to do? We raised them together. I didn't think I could do it alone. I fell apart. I couldn't take care of them."

The Omaha World-Herald reported that the man had a "history of unemployment, eviction notices and unpaid bills" and a psychologist's determination that he lacked common sense.

The children's grandmother told the World-Herald other family members planned to take care of the children, but the paper said their destination was still uncertain.

In USA Today, Landry said the children were "struggling to varying degrees with what's happened to them."

The World-Herald wrote that "state social service officials cautioned Thursday that leaving children at hospitals doesn't absolve parents of their responsibilities."

As if the events already recounted weren't odd enough, the World-Herald said that in a separate incident, an 18 year old boy had turned himself in under the law Tuesday at a hospital in Grand Island, Nebraska.

The moral of this story appears to be that safe haven laws need to be very carefully and narrowly written to ensure they're not abused by parents.

Making sure an unwanted baby finds a home where he or she will be healthy and cared for is one thing. Telling teenagers or nine children "you're not my responsibility any more" is another.

Not trying to start another anti-abortion thread, I just thought this was an interesting take on how some parents are abandoning their children.

Are parents abusing this law? What is the difference between leaving a one day old baby, a month old baby, a one year old, or a ten year old.

Why is it okay to leave an "unwanted baby," but not an unwanted 10 year old? Is not an unwanted child an unwanted child regardless of the age?

This article left me with many questions and emotions, from the "common sense" of the father to the heartbreak of the children.

Needless to say I will be praying for this family.

Re: Father leaves nine children at Nebraska hospital - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2008/9/27 13:34

While the "safe haven" law was written with the best of intentions (the welfare of newborns and infants) at heart; it is being misused by the parents who are "overwhelmed" by the burdens and obligations of parenting. I think the church could step in and help out with teaching coping skills and offering help to struggling families!!