

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 487 Session of 2015

INTRODUCED BY DONATUCCI, V. BROWN, COHEN, YOUNGBLOOD, ROZZI, DIGIROLAMO, McNEILL, BISHOP, ROEBUCK, VEREB, MILLARD, LONGIETTI, SCHLOSSBERG, THOMAS, D. COSTA, MURT, READSHAW, KIRKLAND, MATZIE, ROSS, ACOSTA, WHEELAND, CRUZ, WATSON, C. PARKER, KILLION, GROVE, CALTAGIRONE, PHILLIPS-HILL, EVERETT, MAJOR, MAHONEY, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GILLEN, FARINA AND SCHWEYER, SEPTEMBER 18, 2015

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, SEPTEMBER 18, 2015

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating November 17, 2015, as "World Prematurity Day" in
2 Pennsylvania and recognizing the serious public health
3 concern of prematurity in birth and the compelling need to
4 reduce the incidence of preterm births in this Commonwealth.

5 WHEREAS, The March of Dimes has declared November 17, 2015,
6 as "World Prematurity Day," a chance to raise awareness about
7 the topic of prematurity on the local, national and
8 international level; and

9 WHEREAS, While most women give birth to healthy, full-term
10 babies, premature births are not uncommon and involve much
11 emotional pain for the mother and her family; and

12 WHEREAS, Also known as preterm birth, a premature birth is
13 one that occurs at least three weeks before the due date for a
14 baby, or less than 37-weeks' gestation; and

15 WHEREAS, Preterm birth can happen to any pregnant woman, and
16 in approximately four out of every ten cases, the cause is

1 unknown; and

2 WHEREAS, There are three groups of women at greatest risk of
3 preterm labor and birth: women who have had a previous preterm
4 birth, women who are pregnant with twins or higher order
5 multiples and women with certain uterine or cervical
6 abnormalities; and

7 WHEREAS, If a woman has any of these three risk factors, it
8 is especially important for her to know the signs and symptoms
9 of preterm labor and what to do if they occur; and

10 WHEREAS, Among the known lifestyle risk factors for preterm
11 birth are a woman's use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and
12 inadequate preconception and prenatal care, although prematurity
13 in birth may occur in women who have no known risk factors; and

14 WHEREAS, Preterm babies represent the largest child patient
15 group, and the number of preterm births continues to increase
16 even as the total number of overall births is steadily
17 decreasing; and

18 WHEREAS, Worldwide approximately one in every ten babies is
19 born premature, and every year about 15 million children are
20 born too early; and

21 WHEREAS, Despite this high number and the risks involved, the
22 public is not fully aware of the prevention of preterm birth and
23 the problems and risks involved in the development of a preterm
24 infant; and

25 WHEREAS, A recent report ranks the United States 131st in the
26 world in terms of its preterm birth rate of 12 per 100 live
27 births, almost tied with Somalia, Thailand and Turkey; and

28 WHEREAS, With a 2014 preterm birth rate of 10.7%,
29 Pennsylvania received a "B" on its report card, indicating
30 improvement in the past years, but the need for more improvement

1 in reducing the number of preterm births in this Commonwealth
2 exists; and

3 WHEREAS, Although babies may survive preterm birth, some may
4 require special medical care requiring weeks or months of
5 hospitalization, and oftentimes these babies face adverse health
6 conditions over the course of their lives, such as chronic
7 respiratory problems; cerebral palsy; a higher risk of learning,
8 behavioral and intellectual disabilities; vision and hearing
9 loss; feeding and digestive problems; sensory and motor
10 deficits; infections; and cardiovascular diseases or diabetes,
11 compared to their full-term counterparts; and

12 WHEREAS, In the United States, the annual cost of these
13 serious health consequences is estimated to be more than \$26
14 billion; and

15 WHEREAS, Prematurity is the leading cause of death for
16 newborn babies, and, compared to most industrialized countries,
17 the United States has a high rate of preterm birth, as each year
18 more than 450,000 preterm births, affecting 11.5% of all babies,
19 occur in this nation; and

20 WHEREAS, Although doctors have made exceptional progress in
21 the care of premature babies, more research is needed to
22 increase the medical community's understanding of the risk
23 factors for premature birth; and

24 WHEREAS, Researchers agree that better screening tests need
25 to be developed to identify women likely to give birth early, as
26 well as treatments that can be used early to interrupt the
27 cascade of events leading to prematurity; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate
29 November 17, 2015, as "World Prematurity Day" in Pennsylvania
30 and recognize the serious public health concern of prematurity

1 in birth and the compelling need to reduce the incidence of
2 preterm births in this Commonwealth; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commend the staff
4 and volunteers of the March of Dimes for their considerable
5 efforts toward preventing preterm birth, infant mortality and
6 birth defects by educating and supporting women and families
7 regarding healthy birth.