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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 1102 Session of  
2018

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INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, READSHAW, CALTAGIRONE, BIZZARRO,  
SCHLOSSBERG, NEILSON, HENNESSEY, DAVIS, HILL-EVANS, SOLOMON,  
MILLARD, WATSON, YOUNGBLOOD, KINSEY, J. McNEILL, DiGIROLAMO,  
DRISCOLL, DALEY AND WARREN, OCTOBER 3, 2018

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
OCTOBER 3, 2018

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing emotional abuse of children and its deleterious  
2 effect on all individuals in this Commonwealth.

3 WHEREAS, Dorota Iwaniec, PhD, has described emotional abuse  
4 as "a persistent, chronic pattern of parental behaviour ...  
5 which over the years becomes internalised and gives rise to the  
6 feeling that the child alone is to blame"; and

7 WHEREAS, Emotional abuse of children takes many forms and may  
8 include rejection, isolation, terrorization, intentional lack of  
9 acknowledgment, corruption, verbal assault and overpressure to  
10 follow a parent's or guardian's demands; and

11 WHEREAS, Childhood emotional abuse can occur in unexpected  
12 environments, perpetrated in homes, foster homes and group homes  
13 as well as secure care and criminal justice facilities; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2008, approximately 55,196 children, or 7.3% of  
15 all substantiated cases of child maltreatment, were victims of  
16 childhood emotional abuse; and

1       WHEREAS, This figure may not reflect the full scope of the  
2 problem: childhood emotional abuse can be difficult to detect,  
3 define and measure, especially across generations; and

4       WHEREAS, Research published in 2001 estimated that  
5 psychological maltreatment may have been significantly present  
6 in the childhood histories of more than one-third of the general  
7 adult population of the United States; and

8       WHEREAS, As a public health issue, childhood emotional abuse  
9 bears personal and societal costs; and

10       WHEREAS, Victim-serving organizations consider the lasting  
11 effects of emotional abuse, especially childhood emotional  
12 abuse, to be the "most damaging form of maltreatment"; and

13       WHEREAS, Survivors may experience lifelong patterns of  
14 depression, estrangement, anxiety, low self-esteem,  
15 inappropriate or troubled relationships or lack of empathy, and  
16 the societal costs are great; and

17       WHEREAS, Prevent Child Abuse America estimated the economic  
18 impact of child abuse and neglect at \$104 billion in 2007, with  
19 \$33 billion in direct costs for foster care services,  
20 hospitalization, mental health treatment and law enforcement and  
21 more than \$70 billion in indirect costs for loss of individual  
22 productivity, chronic health problems, special education and  
23 delinquent and criminal justice services; and

24       WHEREAS, It is important to enact legislation that raises  
25 awareness of childhood emotional abuse, makes detection easier,  
26 facilitates home visiting and parent mutual support self-help  
27 groups and provides proactive mental health services for victims  
28 and abusers; and

29       WHEREAS, This type of legislation would break parents and  
30 guardians, children and society from the intergenerational cycle

1 of abuse and create a healthier, safer future for Pennsylvania;  
2 therefore be it

3       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize  
4 emotional abuse of children and its deleterious effect on all  
5 individuals in this Commonwealth.