HOUSE . . . . No. 3036

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESENTED BY:

John W. Scibak

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To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act to designate shaken baby syndrome awareness week.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
John W. Scibak	2nd Hampshire
Susan C. Tucker	Second Essex and Middlesex
Martha M. Walz	8th Suffolk
Jennifer M. Callahan	18th Worcester
Peter J. Koutoujian	10th Middlesex

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

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AN ACT TO DESIGNATE SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME AWARENESS WEEK.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1   Whereas, The most recent National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System figures reveal that almost
2   900,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the United States in 2005, causing unspeakable
3   pain and suffering to our most vulnerable citizens;
4   Whereas, Among the children who are victims of abuse and neglect, nearly four children die in the
5   United States each day;
6   Whereas, Abusive head trauma, including the trauma known as "Shaken Baby Syndrome", is recognized
7   as the leading cause of death of physically abused children;
8   Whereas, Shaken Baby Syndrome can result in the loss of vision, brain damage, paralysis, seizures, or
9   death;
10 Whereas, A recent report in the Journal of the American Medical Association estimated that, in the
11 United States, an average of 300 children will die each year, and 600 to 1,200 more will be injured, of
12 whom two-thirds will be infants under 1 year in age, as a result of Shaken Baby Syndrome, with many
13 cases resulting in severe and permanent disabilities;
14 Whereas, Medical professionals believe that thousands of additional cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome
15 are being misdiagnosed or not detected;
16 Whereas, Shaken Baby Syndrome often results in permanent, irreparable brain damage or death to an
17 infant and many result in more than $1,000,000 in medical costs to care for a single, disabled child in
18 just the few first years of life;
19 Whereas, The most effective solution for ending Shaken Baby Syndrome is to prevent the abuse, and it
20 is clear that the minimal costs of education and prevention programs may preclude enormous medical
21 and disability costs as well as immeasurable amounts of grief for families;
22 Whereas, Prevention programs have demonstrated that educating new parents about injury prevention
23 and the danger of shaking young children can bring about a significant reduction in the number of cases
24 of Shaken Baby Syndrome;
25 Whereas, Education programs have been shown to raise awareness and provide critically important
26 information about Shaken Baby Syndrome to parents, caregivers, daycare workers, child protection
27 employees, law enforcement personnel, health care professionals, and legal representatives; *and*
28 Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide
29 forthwith for the annual observance of Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week,
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31 Therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of
32 the public convenience.
33 SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition, is hereby amended
34 by inserting after section 15CCCCC, the following section: -
35 SECTION 15 DDDDD. The Governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart the third full week
36 in April as "Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week" in recognition of the number children and
37 families in the Commonwealth affected by Shaken Baby Syndrome and the need for increased public
38 awareness, research and support for victims and their families, and recommending that the week be
39 observed in an appropriate manner by the people.