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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 137 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY MURT, ACOSTA, BISHOP, V. BROWN, CALTAGIRONE,  
COHEN, D. COSTA, CUTLER, DAVIS, DIGIROLAMO, DONATUCCI,  
DRISCOLL, DUSH, GIBBONS, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRELL, HARHART,  
HENNESSEY, KILLION, KINSEY, KIRKLAND, LONGIETTI, MAHONEY,  
MAJOR, MARSICO, McNEILL, MILLARD, C. PARKER, PAYNE, PICKETT,  
READSHAW, ROSS, ROZZI, SCHLOSSBERG, SCHWEYER, SNYDER, SONNEY,  
THOMAS, WATSON AND YOUNGBLOOD, MARCH 2, 2015

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
MARCH 2, 2015

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the week of April 19 through 25, 2015, as "Shaken  
2 Baby Syndrome Awareness Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The well-being of this generation and future  
4 generations depends in great measure upon the ability and  
5 dedication of those who devote themselves to make the safety,  
6 welfare and well-being of our precious children their highest  
7 priority; and

8 WHEREAS, In 2012, statistics show that 680,000 children were  
9 victims of abuse and neglect in the United States and according  
10 to the Department of Human Services this number includes 3,565  
11 children in this Commonwealth; and

12 WHEREAS, On average, between four and seven children will die  
13 every day as the result of abuse or neglect in the United  
14 States; and

15 WHEREAS, The leading cause of death and disability among

1 abused children under five years of age is infant abusive head  
2 trauma, including the inflicted trauma known as shaken baby  
3 syndrome; and

4 WHEREAS, Shaken baby syndrome is one of the most severe forms  
5 of child abuse caused by the violent shaking of an infant with  
6 or without impact against an object; and

7 WHEREAS, Shaken baby syndrome and other inflicted head  
8 traumas occur when a caregiver loses control and shakes a baby  
9 or young child, most frequently less than one year of age, but  
10 in some cases as old as five years of age, resulting in  
11 blindness, broken bones, cerebral palsy, brain damage, hearing  
12 loss, paralysis, seizures, mental retardation, speech or  
13 learning difficulties and death; and

14 WHEREAS, Such abuse causes unspeakable pain and suffering to  
15 our most vulnerable residents, while putting enormous strain on  
16 families in all communities; and

17 WHEREAS, On average across the United States, 750 to 3,750  
18 infants and young children are diagnosed with shaken baby  
19 syndrome every year, with medical experts believing that  
20 thousands of additional cases are misdiagnosed or undetected;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Approximately one-third of the victims die as a  
23 result of direct brain injuries; and

24 WHEREAS, Even in milder cases in which babies look normal  
25 immediately after the shaking, the child may eventually develop  
26 irreversible damage due to the child's injuries; and

27 WHEREAS, The most effective way to end shaken baby syndrome  
28 is by preventing such abuse and it is clear that minimal costs  
29 of educational and preventive programs may avert enormous  
30 medical and disability costs and immeasurable grief for many

1 families; and

2 WHEREAS, Hospital-based education programs, such as the  
3 nationally recognized Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention &  
4 Awareness Program developed by Dr. Mark Dias of the Penn State  
5 Hershey Medical Center, provide critically important information  
6 about shaken baby syndrome to every parent of every child born  
7 in this Commonwealth; and

8 WHEREAS, In 2002, the Shaken Baby Syndrome Education Act was  
9 enacted, establishing the Shaken Baby Syndrome Education and  
10 Prevention Program; and

11 WHEREAS, The Shaken Baby Syndrome Education and Prevention  
12 Program partnered with the Department of Health, and in 2006,  
13 Pennsylvania became the first state in the nation to provide  
14 consistent hospital-based education in 100% of all birthing and  
15 children's hospitals in this Commonwealth; and

16 WHEREAS, Prevention and awareness efforts are supported by  
17 national and local organizations, such as the Department of  
18 Health, the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, the  
19 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy  
20 of Pediatrics, Prevent Child Abuse Pennsylvania, the Cynthia  
21 Gibbs Foundation, the Skipper Initiative, the National Center on  
22 Shaken Baby Syndrome, the Children's Defense Fund, the Child  
23 Welfare League, the Shaken Baby Alliance and the Pennsylvania  
24 Family Support Alliance, that all work to educate new parents  
25 and caregivers and increase awareness among the general public  
26 to encourage increased support for victims and their families in  
27 the health care and criminal justice systems; and

28 WHEREAS, Prevention and awareness has been shown to provide  
29 critically important information about shaken baby syndrome to  
30 parents, caregivers, day-care workers, child protection

1 employees, law enforcement personnel, health care professionals,  
2 the general public and representatives of the justice system;  
3 therefore be it

4       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the  
5 week of April 19 through 25, 2015, as "Shaken Baby Syndrome  
6 Awareness Week" in Pennsylvania and encourage all residents to  
7 observe this week with programs and activities that share the  
8 commitment of prevention, awareness, community support and  
9 partnerships to protect our children from shaken baby syndrome;  
10 and be it further

11       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commend those  
12 advocates, organizations and agencies of national, State, county  
13 and local governments that work continuously to educate parents,  
14 caregivers and professionals about the causes, consequences and  
15 prevention of shaken baby syndrome and other inflicted head  
16 injuries.