
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 548 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY DONATUCCI, KOTIK, LUCAS, COHEN, EVERETT, KINSEY,
PARKER, V. BROWN, SCHLOSSBERG, BROWNLIE, DAVIS, CALTAGIRONE,
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KIRKLAND, ROCK, WATSON, FLECK, MCCARTER, CRUZ AND CLYMER,
NOVEMBER 12, 2013

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
NOVEMBER 12, 2013

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating November 17, 2013, 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, 2013,
6 as World Prematurity Day, a chance to raise awareness about the
7 topic of prematurity on the local, national and international
8 level; and

9 WHEREAS, Most women give birth to a healthy, full-term baby,
10 however, premature births are not uncommon and involve much
11 emotional pain for the childbearing woman 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

1 in about four out of every ten cases the causes are 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, triplets or more; and
5 women with certain uterine or cervical abnormalities; and

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

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

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

16 WHEREAS, Worldwide, about one baby in ten is born premature
17 and, every year, about 15 million children are born too early;
18 and

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

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

26 WHEREAS, With a 2012 preterm birth rate of 11%, Pennsylvania
27 received a "B" on its report card, indicating improvement in the
28 past years, but still the need for more improvement in reducing
29 the number of preterm births in this Commonwealth exists; and

30 WHEREAS, Although babies may survive preterm birth, some may

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

9 WHEREAS, The annual costs of these unfortunate health
10 consequences relating to premature births in the United States
11 are estimated at more than \$26 billion; and

12 WHEREAS, Prematurity is the leading cause of death for
13 newborn babies and, compared to most industrialized countries,
14 the United States has a high rate of preterm birth, as each year
15 more than 500,000 preterm births, affecting 12.3% of all babies,
16 occur in this nation; and

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

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

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate
26 November 17, 2013, as "World Prematurity Day" in Pennsylvania
27 and recognize the serious public health concern of prematurity
28 in birth and the compelling need to reduce the incidence of
29 preterm births in this Commonwealth; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commend the staff

1 and volunteers of the March of Dimes for their considerable
2 efforts toward preventing preterm birth, infant mortality and
3 birth defects by educating and supporting women and families
4 regarding healthy birth.