
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 817 Session of
2014

INTRODUCED BY DENLINGER, STURLA, ROZZI, AUMENT, MIRABITO,
KIRKLAND, LONGIETTI, COHEN, BOBACK, MCNEILL, CALTAGIRONE,
WATSON, ROSS, YOUNGBLOOD, MILLARD, LUCAS, MURT, GRELL,
V. BROWN, MUSTIO, JAMES, SONNEY, EVERETT, MENTZER, MCCARTER,
FRANKEL, BISHOP, VEREB, GIBBONS, SWANGER, PASHINSKI, SCHLEGEL
CULVER, KORTZ, GOODMAN, GABLER, ROCK, PICKETT, D. COSTA,
C. HARRIS, DIGIROLAMO, BROWNLEE, HARHART, READSHAW, FARINA
AND FLECK, APRIL 29, 2014

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
APRIL 29, 2014

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the week of April 20 through 26, 2014, as "Shaken
2 Baby Syndrome Awareness Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The well-being of this and future generations
4 depends in great measure upon the able and dedicated efforts of
5 all to devote themselves to make the safety, welfare and well-
6 being of our precious children among the highest of our
7 priorities; and

8 WHEREAS, The most recent statistics compiled by the Federal
9 Government show that 680,000 children were victims of abuse and
10 neglect in the United States in 2012, including 3,565 children
11 in this Commonwealth according to the Department of Public
12 Welfare; and

13 WHEREAS, In 2012, in the United States 1,640 children died of
14 abuse and neglect, including 33 children in this Commonwealth

1 with 45% of the children being under one year of age; and

2 WHEREAS, On an average day in the United States, between four
3 and seven children will die as a consequence of abuse or
4 neglect; and

5 WHEREAS, The leading cause of death and disability among
6 abused children under five years of age is infant abusive head
7 trauma, including the inflicted trauma known as Shaken Baby
8 Syndrome; and

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

16 WHEREAS, Such abuse causes unspeakable pain and suffering to
17 our vulnerable citizens while putting enormous strain on
18 families in all communities; and

19 WHEREAS, On average across the United States 750 to 3,750
20 infants and young children are diagnosed with Shaken Baby
21 Syndrome every year, with medical experts believing that
22 thousands of additional cases are misdiagnosed or undetected;
23 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 their injuries; and

27 WHEREAS, In 2012, the Department of Public Welfare reported
28 78 cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome in this Commonwealth and of
29 these, ten children died from their injuries; and

30 WHEREAS, Twenty-five percent of Shaken Baby Syndrome victims

1 die as a result of their injuries, while 65% will often suffer
2 permanent, irreparable brain damage and may result in more than
3 \$1 million in medical and rehabilitation costs for the care of a
4 single disabled child during the first years of life; and

5 WHEREAS, The national cost of child maltreatment estimated by
6 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2011 is
7 \$210,012 over the course of a victim's lifetime, including the
8 costs of child welfare, special education, criminal justice
9 expenses, medical care and lost productivity as an adult; and

10 WHEREAS, The national cost of child abuse is estimated by the
11 Centers for Disease Control to be more than \$124 billion a year,
12 and the cost of child abuse in this Commonwealth is \$3.55
13 billion a year according to the Pennsylvania Family Support
14 Alliance; and

15 WHEREAS, It is estimated that the taxpayers of this
16 Commonwealth, through the Department of Public Welfare's Medical
17 Assistance, pay a substantial amount of the medical and
18 rehabilitation costs, including special education,
19 investigations, prosecutions and incarceration of perpetrators
20 in shaken baby cases; and

21 WHEREAS, The most effective way to end Shaken Baby Syndrome
22 is by preventing such abuse, and it is clear that minimal costs
23 of educational and preventive programs may avert enormous
24 medical and disability costs and immeasurable grief for many
25 families; and

26 WHEREAS, Hospital-based education programs, such as the
27 nationally recognized Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention &
28 Awareness Program developed by Dr. Mark Dias of the Penn State
29 Hershey Medical Center provides critically important information
30 about Shaken Baby Syndrome to every parent of every child born

1 in this Commonwealth; and

2 WHEREAS, In 2002, the act of December 9, 2002 (P.L.1406,
3 No.176), known as the Shaken Baby Syndrome Education Act, was
4 enacted, the program partnered with the Department of Health,
5 and in 2006, Pennsylvania became the first state in the nation
6 to provide consistent hospital-based education in 100% of all
7 birthing and children's hospitals in this Commonwealth; and

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

20 WHEREAS, Prevention and awareness has been shown to provide
21 critically important information about Shaken Baby Syndrome to
22 parents, caregivers, daycare workers, child protection
23 employees, law enforcement personnel, health care professionals,
24 the general public and representatives of the justice system;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives wishes to commend Dr.
27 Dias and his dedicated nurse coordinators at the Shaken Baby
28 Syndrome Prevention and Awareness Program for 12 successful
29 years as leaders in the fight to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome
30 throughout this Commonwealth; and

1 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives also wishes to commend
2 those advocates, organizations and agencies of national, State,
3 county and local governments, which work continuously to educate
4 parents, caregivers and professionals about the causes,
5 consequences and prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and other
6 inflicted head injury; therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize April
8 20 through 26, 2014, as "Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week" in
9 Pennsylvania and encourage all Pennsylvanians to observe this
10 week with programs and activities that share the commitment of
11 prevention, awareness, community support and partnerships to
12 protect our smallest from Shaken Baby Syndrome.