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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 302 Session of  
2022

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INTRODUCED BY CAPPELLETTI, BARTOLOTTA, HUGHES, MARTIN, PHILLIPS-  
HILL, BROWNE, COMMITTA, FONTANA AND COSTA, MAY 24, 2022

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REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, MAY 24, 2022

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of May 2022 as "Celiac Awareness Month" in  
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, May is observed as "Celiac Awareness Month" by the  
4 Celiac Disease Foundation, the National Foundation for Celiac  
5 Awareness and other celiac disease organizations around the  
6 nation and the world; and

7 WHEREAS, According to the Celiac Disease Foundation, celiac  
8 disease is a serious autoimmune disease that occurs in  
9 genetically predisposed people where the ingestion of gluten  
10 leads to damage in the small intestine; and

11 WHEREAS, Celiac disease is estimated to impact 1 in 100  
12 people worldwide and approximately 3 million Americans,  
13 including more than 129,000 Pennsylvanians; and

14 WHEREAS, Researchers are finding that celiac disease  
15 prevalence is doubling approximately every 15 years, making it a  
16 growing public health concern; and

17 WHEREAS, For people with celiac disease, gluten, a protein  
18 found in wheat, barley and rye, is poisonous; and

1       WHEREAS, Even a trace amount of gluten, such as a crumb, can  
2 trigger an immune response leading the body to attack the small  
3 intestine, and this intestinal damage can cause more than 200  
4 debilitating symptoms; and

5       WHEREAS, According to the University of Chicago Celiac  
6 Disease Center, gluten ingestion for people with celiac disease  
7 causes permanent immunological scarring, doubles the risk of  
8 heart disease, and acts as a carcinogen, quadrupling the risk of  
9 small intestinal cancers; and

10       WHEREAS, Many individuals with celiac disease are never  
11 tested and sometimes are never even symptomatic; and

12       WHEREAS, By raising awareness of celiac disease, we can  
13 improve early diagnosis, encourage policymakers to increase  
14 access to services and fund research, and reduce the feelings of  
15 isolation and stigma faced by many patients; and

16       WHEREAS, Celiac disease research is severely underfunded in  
17 proportion to the scale of the disease, treatment burden and  
18 lack of available treatment options; and

19       WHEREAS, According to an analysis published in 2017 by the  
20 American Gastroenterological Association titled "Disparities  
21 Among Gastrointestinal Disorders in Research Funding from the  
22 National Institutes of Health," celiac disease receives the  
23 lowest amount of National Institutes of Health funding over a  
24 five-year period; and

25       WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health's research funding  
26 for celiac disease averaged \$3 million annually or \$1 for every  
27 person with the disease; and

28       WHEREAS, Celiac disease research also received the lowest  
29 amount of National Institutes of Health grants; and

30       WHEREAS, Currently, a strictly gluten-free lifetime diet is

1 the only way to manage the disease, and this is inadequate given  
2 that 80% of foods contain gluten; and

3 WHEREAS, There is a constant risk of cross-contamination in  
4 foods and gluten is not required to be labeled on packaged foods  
5 in the United States; and

6 WHEREAS, On August 3, 2021, the Food Labeling Modernization  
7 Act of 2021 (FLMA) was introduced in the Congress of the United  
8 States, legislation which would make gluten the tenth major food  
9 allergen; and

10 WHEREAS, The FLMA requires that gluten be labeled on all  
11 packaged foods in the United States, bringing our country into  
12 alignment with 62 other countries around the world, including  
13 Canada and across Europe; and

14 WHEREAS, The Senate is an institution that can raise  
15 awareness for celiac disease with the general public and the  
16 medical community; therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize the month of May 2022 as  
18 "Celiac Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania.