

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 499

By Tracy

A RESOLUTION to designate August 2012 as Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Awareness Month in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) is a neuromuscular disease characterized by degeneration of motor neurons within the spinal cord; and

WHEREAS, the clinical spectrum of SMA ranges from early infant death to normal adult life with only mild weakness; and

WHEREAS, in all forms the primary feature of SMA is muscle weakness advancing to atrophy and wasting away of the muscle tissues of the body; and

WHEREAS, the incidence of infantile SMA is approximately one in six thousand live births with SMA1 making up eighty percent of all spinal muscular atrophies; and

WHEREAS, SMA1 is the most common single genetic cause of death in infancy with a life expectancy of less than three years; and

WHEREAS, SMA is caused by mutations of the SMN gene which is found on chromosome 5, and the affected SMN gene is called SMN1; and the diagnosis of SMA requires genetic testing in order to confirm its presence; and

WHEREAS, while the effects of SMA are physically devastating, the intellectual abilities and cognitive skills of SMA sufferers is normal and it is often observed that they are unusually bright and sociable allowing them to engage in and enjoy normal learning and socialization opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness month will increase public awareness of the circumstances of infants, children, and families affected by SMA, will acknowledge the terrible impact of this disease on those touched by this disease, and will recognize the need for

SMA research and for quality treatment, care, and support for those affected by SMA; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that August 2012 is hereby designated as “Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month” in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this body encourages continued research for treatments of and a cure for Spinal Muscular Atrophy and the improvement of care and support for those afflicted with this disease and their families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.