

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 507

Designating September 25, 2023, as “National Ataxia Awareness Day”, and raising awareness of ataxia, ataxia research, and the search for a cure.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 14, 2023

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. STABENOW) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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## RESOLUTION

Designating September 25, 2023, as “National Ataxia Awareness Day”, and raising awareness of ataxia, ataxia research, and the search for a cure.

Whereas ataxia is a clinical manifestation indicating degeneration or dysfunction of the brain that negatively affects the coordination, precision, and accurate timing of physical movements;

Whereas ataxia can strike individuals of all ages, including children;

Whereas the term “ataxia” is used to classify a group of rare, inherited neurodegenerative diseases including—

- (1) ataxia telangiectasia;
- (2) episodic ataxia;
- (3) Friedreich’s ataxia; and

(4) spinocerebellar ataxia;

Whereas there are many known types of genetic ataxia, but the genetic basis for ataxia in some patients is still unknown;

Whereas all inherited ataxias affect fewer than 200,000 individuals in the United States and, therefore, are recognized as rare diseases under the Orphan Drug Act (Public Law 97–414; 96 Stat. 2049);

Whereas some genetic ataxias are inherited in an autosomal dominant manner while others are inherited in an autosomal recessive manner;

Whereas ataxia symptoms can also be caused by noninherited health conditions and other factors, including stroke, tumor, cerebral palsy, head trauma, multiple sclerosis, alcohol addiction or misuse, and certain medications;

Whereas ataxia can present physical, psychological, and financial challenges for patients and their families;

Whereas symptoms and outcomes of ataxia progress at different rates and can include—

(1) lack of coordination;

(2) slurred speech;

(3) cardiomyopathy;

(4) scoliosis;

(5) eye movement abnormalities;

(6) difficulty walking;

(7) tremors;

(8) trouble eating and swallowing;

(9) difficulties with other activities that require fine motor skills; and

(10) death;

Whereas many patients with ataxia require the use of assistive devices, such as wheelchairs and walkers, to aid in their mobility, and many individuals may need physical and occupational therapy;

Whereas few treatments and no cures have been approved for ataxia; and

Whereas clinical research to develop safe and effective treatments for ataxia is ongoing: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2           (1) recognizes the need for greater public  
3       awareness of ataxia;

4           (2) designates September 25, 2023, as “Na-  
5       tional Ataxia Awareness Day”;

6           (3) supports the goals of National Ataxia  
7       Awareness Day, which are—

8           (A) to raise awareness of the causes and  
9       symptoms of ataxia among the general public  
10      and health care professionals;

11          (B) to improve diagnosis of ataxia and ac-  
12      cess to care for patients affected by ataxia; and

13          (C) to accelerate ataxia research, including  
14      on safe and effective treatment options and, ul-  
15      timately, a cure;

16          (4) recognizes the individuals in the United  
17      States who face challenges due to having ataxia, and  
18      the families of those individuals; and

1           (5) encourages States, territories, and localities  
2           to support the goals of National Ataxia Awareness  
3           Day.

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