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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 434 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY FONTANA, DINNIMAN, GREENLEAF, TARTAGLIONE,  
SABATINA, TEPLITZ, BREWSTER, RESCHENTHALER, KILLION, SCHWANK,  
COSTA, FARNESE, MENSCH, VULAKOVICH AND WARD,  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2016

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INTRODUCED AND ADOPTED, SEPTEMBER 27, 2016

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## A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the week of October 16 through 22, 2016, as  
2 "Homeless Children's Awareness Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, "Homeless Children's Awareness Week" brings  
4 attention to the growing problems and issues facing homeless  
5 children throughout this Commonwealth and across the nation; and

6 WHEREAS, Children are the fastest-growing segment of the  
7 homeless population; and

8 WHEREAS, According to the latest numbers from the Department  
9 of Education, there are 22,000 homeless school-age children in  
10 this Commonwealth; and

11 WHEREAS, Of the Commonwealth's 500 school districts, 96% have  
12 at least one homeless student who attends school within the  
13 district; and

14 WHEREAS, In Allegheny County alone, 3,000 children were  
15 homeless at some point last year; and

16 WHEREAS, The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states  
17 that children are homeless if they lack a fixed, regular and

1 adequate nighttime residence; and

2 WHEREAS, Children of all ages are negatively impacted by  
3 homelessness in the areas of physical health, emotional and  
4 behavioral development and academic success; and

5 WHEREAS, Children and youths experiencing homelessness face  
6 obstacles such as losing treasured possessions and dealing with  
7 hunger and sleep deprivation; and

8 WHEREAS, A homeless family's constant moving disrupts  
9 children's education, causing frequent absences from school that  
10 can result in low test scores and that can double the likelihood  
11 of repeating a grade; and

12 WHEREAS, The National Coalition for the Homeless cites  
13 studies indicating that youths experiencing homelessness are set  
14 back academically by three to six months; and

15 WHEREAS, The national school dropout rate for homeless  
16 children is 60% higher than for a child who does not have that  
17 experience during the school year; and

18 WHEREAS, New provisions of Federal law are being implemented  
19 to better assist students and families with the resources and  
20 attention they need; and

21 WHEREAS, Specifically, under the McKinney-Vento Homeless  
22 Education Assistance Improvement Act, districts must work with  
23 other local agencies such as law enforcement, juvenile courts  
24 and runaway and homeless youth centers; and

25 WHEREAS, Preschool-age homeless children must have access to  
26 and receive supportive services; and

27 WHEREAS, Districts must provide transportation until the end  
28 of the school year even if a student becomes permanently housed  
29 outside of the district; and

30 WHEREAS, More importantly, districts must protect the privacy

1 of homeless students' records; and

2 WHEREAS, For more than 17 years, the Homeless Children's  
3 Education Fund has advanced the education of children and youths  
4 experiencing homelessness in Allegheny County in an effort to  
5 combat the statistics; and

6 WHEREAS, The Homeless Children's Education Fund provides  
7 educational programs and services, acts as a trusted advocate,  
8 shares expertise and facilitates collaborative relationships  
9 that maximize the collective impact among community partners;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Many events are taking place in Pittsburgh during  
12 "Homeless Children's Awareness Week," including a storytelling  
13 event, a performance art installation, happy hour and a 5K race  
14 to raise awareness about children experiencing homelessness; and

15 WHEREAS, Individuals and groups across this Commonwealth are  
16 encouraged to create their own events during "Homeless  
17 Children's Awareness Week" to raise awareness about the needs  
18 and challenges of children and youths experiencing homelessness;  
19 therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That the Senate designate the week of October 16  
21 through 22, 2016, as "Homeless Children's Awareness Week" in  
22 Pennsylvania.