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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 311 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY KULIK, DIGIROLAMO, HENNESSEY, MURT, LONGIETTI,  
MILLARD, HELM, FREEMAN, KINSEY, TOOHL, DUSH, SONNEY, WARD,  
SOLOMON, BIZZARRO, O'NEILL, READSHAW, NEILSON, CALTAGIRONE,  
DRISCOLL, DeLUCA, PHILLIPS-HILL, HILL-EVANS, MILNE, MARSICO  
AND WARREN, MAY 5, 2017

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
MAY 5, 2017

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## A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of June 2017, as "Myasthenia Gravis  
2 Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Myasthenia gravis (MG) is a chronic autoimmune  
4 neuromuscular disease characterized by varying degrees of  
5 weakness of the skeletal muscles of the body; and

6 WHEREAS, MG first appeared in medical reports in 1672, but  
7 did not earn its name, myasthenia gravis, which literally means  
8 grave muscular weakness, until sometime during the 1890s; and

9 WHEREAS, MG is caused by a defect in the transmission of  
10 nerve impulses to muscles, whereby antibodies effectively block,  
11 alter or destroy the nerve cell receptors that generate muscle  
12 contraction; and

13 WHEREAS, MG is classified as an autoimmune disease due to the  
14 fact that in cases involving MG the immune system, which  
15 normally protects the body from foreign organisms, mistakenly  
16 sets upon a course to attack itself; and

1 WHEREAS, The prevalence rate of MG in the United States is an  
2 estimated 20 out of every 100,000 people; and

3 WHEREAS, MG is indiscriminate in its affliction, as it can  
4 occur in all ethnic groups and genders, but primarily affects  
5 young adult women under 40 years of age and older men over 70  
6 years of age; and

7 WHEREAS, It is important to note that MG is not hereditary,  
8 nor is it contagious, and in most cases, its symptoms  
9 manifesting in the form of weakness of the eye muscles,  
10 difficulty in swallowing, slurred or impaired speech, shortness  
11 of breath and weakness in the arms, hands, fingers, legs or  
12 neck; and

13 WHEREAS, Since weakness is a common symptom of many  
14 disorders, the diagnosis of MG is often overlooked or  
15 unnecessarily deferred; and

16 WHEREAS, If underdiagnosed or untreated, MG can progressively  
17 result in a myasthenic crisis or respiratory failure; and

18 WHEREAS, MG can generally be treated and controlled with the  
19 use of medications, therapies or surgical procedures that  
20 include anticholinesterase agents, immunosuppressive drugs,  
21 plasmapheresis or a thymectomy, which is the removal of the  
22 thymus gland; and

23 WHEREAS, The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and  
24 Stroke maintains the primary responsibility of conducting and  
25 supporting research on brain and nervous system disorders,  
26 including MG; and

27 WHEREAS, Organizations such as the Myasthenia Gravis  
28 Foundation of America (MGFA), the Muscular Dystrophy Association  
29 and the Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western Pennsylvania  
30 (MGAWP) at Allegheny General Hospital are leading the effort to

1 foster a greater degree of education and outreach relating to  
2 MG; and

3 WHEREAS, The MGFA's research committee has been instrumental  
4 in supporting research that aims to improve the lives of  
5 patients with MG by creating a comprehensive MG Patient Registry  
6 and designating several broad research priorities, which include  
7 biomarkers, mechanisms of disease, therapeutic strategies and  
8 improving patient outcomes; and

9 WHEREAS, The MGAWP's treatment and advocacy center has played  
10 an integral role in providing first-rate medical care and social  
11 and emotional support to Pennsylvanians living with MG; and

12 WHEREAS, The observance of "Myasthenia Gravis Awareness  
13 Month" provides additional outreach and education concerning MG  
14 by informing the general public about its seriousness and  
15 raising funds to help affected individuals; and

16 WHEREAS, Organizations like MFGA and MGAWP utilize the  
17 observance of "Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month" to encourage  
18 the general public and those living with MG to make effective  
19 use of their social media platforms to spread greater awareness  
20 about MG, engage close friends, relatives and others to attend  
21 an MG screening, contribute financially to organizations  
22 supporting the fight against MG and create awareness about MG in  
23 their workplaces, organizations, schools and social circles; and

24 WHEREAS, The purpose of this resolution is to further the  
25 laudable and worthwhile mission of MG advocates across the  
26 nation to advance knowledge and awareness of a disorder  
27 affecting the lives of many Pennsylvanians and Americans;  
28 therefore be it

29 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the  
30 month of June 2017 as "Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month" in

1 Pennsylvania; and be it further

2       RESOLVED, That all Pennsylvanians be encouraged to learn more  
3 about myasthenia gravis and explore ways that we can unite for a  
4 cure.