

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 989 Session of 2014

INTRODUCED BY DONATUCCI, COHEN, McNEILL, MIRABITO, BOBACK,  
BISHOP, READSHAW, FRANKEL, MACKENZIE, MICOZZIE, V. BROWN,  
HENNESSEY, J. HARRIS, SONNEY, RAPP, KIRKLAND, ROSS, BROWNLEE,  
KINSEY, WATSON, MILLARD, LUCAS, DIGIROLAMO, GIBBONS, THOMAS,  
O'BRIEN, ROCK, MURT, GOODMAN, MAJOR, CALTAGIRONE, McCARTER,  
SCHLOSSBERG, MARSICO, EVERETT, MATZIE AND MAHONEY,  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2014

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, SEPTEMBER 15, 2014

## A RESOLUTION

1 Designating November 17, 2014, as "World Prematurity Day" in  
2 Pennsylvania and recognizing the serious public health  
3 concern of prematurity in birth and the compelling need to  
4 reduce the incidence of preterm births in this Commonwealth.

5 WHEREAS, The March of Dimes has declared November 17, 2014,  
6 as World Prematurity Day, a chance to raise awareness about the  
7 topic of prematurity on the local, national and international  
8 level; and

9 WHEREAS, Most women give birth to healthy, full-term babies,  
10 however, premature births are not uncommon and involve much  
11 emotional pain for the childbearing woman and her family; and

12 WHEREAS, Also known as preterm birth, a premature birth is  
13 one that occurs at least three weeks before the due date for a  
14 baby, or less than 37-weeks' gestation; and

15 WHEREAS, Preterm birth can happen to any pregnant woman, and  
16 in about four out of every ten cases the causes are unknown; and

1 WHEREAS, There are three groups of women at greatest risk of  
2 preterm labor and birth: women who have had a previous preterm  
3 birth; women who are pregnant with twins or higher order  
4 multiples; and women with certain uterine or cervical  
5 abnormalities; and

6 WHEREAS, If a woman has any of these three risk factors, it  
7 is especially important for her to know the signs and symptoms  
8 of preterm labor and what to do if they occur; and

9 WHEREAS, Among the known lifestyle risk factors for preterm  
10 birth are a woman's use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and  
11 inadequate preconception and prenatal care, although prematurity  
12 in birth may occur in women who have no known risk factors; and

13 WHEREAS, Preterm babies represent the largest child patient  
14 group, and their number continues to increase even as the total  
15 number of births is steadily decreasing; and

16 WHEREAS, Worldwide about one baby in ten is born premature,  
17 and every year about 15 million children are born too early; and

18 WHEREAS, Despite this high number and the risks involved, the  
19 public is not fully aware of the prevention of preterm birth and  
20 the problems and risks involved in the development of a preterm  
21 infant; and

22 WHEREAS, A recent report ranks the United States 131st in the  
23 world in terms of its preterm birth rate of 12 per 100 live  
24 births, almost tied with Somalia, Thailand and Turkey; and

25 WHEREAS, With a 2013 preterm birth rate of 10.8%,  
26 Pennsylvania received a "B" on its report card, indicating  
27 improvement in the past years, but the need for more improvement  
28 in reducing the number of preterm births in this Commonwealth  
29 exists; and

30 WHEREAS, Although babies may survive preterm birth, some may

1 require special medical care requiring weeks or months of  
2 hospitalization, and oftentimes these babies face adverse health  
3 conditions over the course of their lives, such as chronic  
4 respiratory problems; cerebral palsy; a higher risk of learning,  
5 behavioral and intellectual disabilities; vision and hearing  
6 loss; feeding and digestive problems; sensory and motor  
7 deficits; infections; and cardiovascular diseases or diabetes,  
8 compared to their full-term counterparts; and

9 WHEREAS, The annual costs of these unfortunate health  
10 consequences relating to premature births in the United States  
11 are estimated at more than \$26 billion; and

12 WHEREAS, Prematurity is the leading cause of death for  
13 newborn babies and, compared to most industrialized countries,  
14 the United States has a high rate of preterm birth, as each year  
15 more than 450,000 preterm births, affecting 11.5% of all babies,  
16 occur in this nation; and

17 WHEREAS, Although doctors have made exceptional progress in  
18 the care of premature babies, more research is needed to  
19 increase the medical community's understanding of the risk  
20 factors for premature birth; and

21 WHEREAS, Researchers agree that better screening tests need  
22 to be developed to identify women likely to give birth early, as  
23 well as treatments that can be used early to interrupt the  
24 cascade of events leading to prematurity; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate  
26 November 17, 2014, as "World Prematurity Day" in Pennsylvania  
27 and recognize the serious public health concern of prematurity  
28 in birth and the compelling need to reduce the incidence of  
29 preterm births in this Commonwealth; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commend the staff

1 and volunteers of the March of Dimes for their considerable  
2 efforts toward preventing preterm birth, infant mortality and  
3 birth defects by educating and supporting women and families  
4 regarding healthy birth.