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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 1013 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY DONATUCCI, SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing November 17, 2016, as "World Prematurity Day" in  
2 Pennsylvania and acknowledging 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, 2016,  
6 as "World Prematurity Day," a chance to raise awareness about  
7 the topic of prematurity on the local, national and  
8 international level; and

9 WHEREAS, While most women give birth to healthy, full-term  
10 babies, premature births are not uncommon and involve much  
11 emotional pain for the mother 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 approximately 4 out of every 10 cases the cause is unknown;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, There are three groups of women at greatest risk of  
19 preterm labor and birth: women who have had a previous preterm

1 birth, women who are pregnant with twins or higher order  
2 multiples and women with certain uterine or cervical  
3 abnormalities; and

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

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

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

15 WHEREAS, Worldwide approximately 1 in every 10 babies is born  
16 premature, and every year about 15 million children are born too  
17 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 2015 preterm birth rate of 9.4%, Pennsylvania  
26 received a "C" on its report card, indicating improvement in the  
27 past years, but the need for more improvement in reducing the  
28 number of preterm births in this Commonwealth exists; and

29 WHEREAS, Although babies may survive preterm birth, some may  
30 require special medical care requiring weeks or months of

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

8 WHEREAS, In the United States, the annual cost of these  
9 serious health consequences is estimated to be more than \$26  
10 billion; and

11 WHEREAS, Prematurity is the leading cause of death for  
12 newborn babies, and, compared to most industrialized countries,  
13 the United States has a high rate of preterm birth as in 2014  
14 more than 380,000 preterm births occurred in this nation; and

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

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

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize  
24 November 17, 2016, as "World Prematurity Day" in Pennsylvania  
25 and acknowledge the serious public health concern of prematurity  
26 in birth and the compelling need to reduce the incidence of  
27 preterm births in this Commonwealth; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commend the staff  
29 and volunteers of the March of Dimes for their considerable  
30 efforts toward preventing preterm birth, infant mortality and

- 1 birth defects by educating and supporting women and families
- 2 regarding healthy birth.