

**TO:** All House Members  
**FROM:** Rep. Maria P. Donatucci  
**DATE:** September 28, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** Co-sponsorship of Resolution – Prematurity Awareness Month in Pennsylvania

In the near future, I plan to introduce a resolution declaring the month of November 2011 as Prematurity Awareness Month in Pennsylvania.

The March of Dimes has declared November 2011 as Prematurity Awareness Month to highlight for the nation the serious public health concern of prematurity in birth, which is the leading cause of newborn death. Indeed, each year, more than half a million babies, or one in eight, are born prematurely in the United States, with more than 16,000 in this Commonwealth.

Although babies may survive preterm birth, some may require special medical care requiring weeks or months of hospitalization, and oftentimes these babies face adverse health conditions over the course of their lives, such as chronic respiratory problems, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, vision and hearing loss, and feeding and digestive problems.

Along with the emotional pain involved for the childbearing woman and her family, these unfortunate health consequences require additional medical care, and the annual costs relating to premature births in the United States are estimated at more than \$26 billion. Although doctors have made exceptional progress in the care of premature babies, more research is needed to increase the medical community's understanding of the risk factors for premature birth.

Please join me in co-sponsoring this resolution to help bring attention to prematurity in birth and its attendant health consequences and costs. Please contact Marilyn Antes at 783-8634, or e-mail her at [mantes@pahouse.net](mailto:mantes@pahouse.net).