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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Ronald G. Waters

SUBJECT: Request for Co-Sponsorship

DATE: August 15, 2012

In the near future, I intend to introduce a resolution recognizing the month of October 2012 as “Infant Mortality Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania. According to the National Healthy Start Association, infant mortality refers to the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births during the first year of life. The infant mortality rate in the United States is 7.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Poverty, limited access to health care, stress, poor prenatal care, lack of exercise, diet and nutrition are factors that can contribute to negative pregnancy and birth outcomes, which can lead to high infant mortality rates.

Infant mortality disproportionately impacts minority women. For instance, African American women are more than twice as likely to experience an infant mortality birth as white women. With 13.4 deaths per 1,000 live births, African Americans have the highest death rates among all ethnic and population groups. African Americans are 2.4 times as likely to die as an infant as compared to non-Hispanic white infants. Hispanic and Native American women incur higher infant mortality and low birth weight rates than white women.

By designating October 2012 as “Infant Mortality Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania, we are bringing awareness to this salient public health issue. If you would like to co-sponsor this resolution, please contact Nilda Jenkins at (717) 772-6955 or via e-mail at njenkins@pahouse.net.