

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing November 17, 2017, 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, 2017,  
6 as "World Prematurity Day," a chance to raise awareness about  
7 the topic of prematurity in birth 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, premature birth happens  
13 when a baby is born before 37 weeks of gestation or more than  
14 three weeks before the due date; 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 who have the

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

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

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

12 WHEREAS, Preterm babies represent the largest patient group  
13 among children, and the number of preterm births is increasing  
14 even as the total number of overall births is steadily  
15 decreasing; and

16 WHEREAS, Worldwide approximately 1 in every 10 babies is born  
17 premature, and every year approximately 15 million children are  
18 born too early; and

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

23 WHEREAS, A recent report ranks the United States 54th in the  
24 world in terms of its preterm birth rate of 12 per 100 live  
25 births, almost tied with Somalia, Thailand and Turkey; and

26 WHEREAS, With a 2016 preterm birth rate of 9.6%, Pennsylvania  
27 received a "C" on its report card, indicating improvement in the  
28 past years, yet the need for a reduction in the number of  
29 preterm births in this Commonwealth still 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 these babies often face adverse health  
3 conditions over the course of their lives, including chronic  
4 respiratory problems, cerebral palsy, a higher risk of a  
5 learning disability, behavioral and intellectual disabilities,  
6 vision and hearing loss, feeding and digestive problems, sensory  
7 and motor deficits, infections and cardiovascular diseases or  
8 diabetes, compared to their full-term counterparts; and

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

15 WHEREAS, In 2014 more than 380,000 preterm births occurred in  
16 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 on the need to develop better  
22 screening tests that identify women likely to give birth early  
23 as well as treatments that can be used to interrupt the cascade  
24 of events leading to prematurity; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize  
26 November 17, 2017, as "World Prematurity Day" in Pennsylvania  
27 and acknowledge 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.