
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 694 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY FABRIZIO, COHEN, KIRKLAND, HEFFLEY, BAKER, BURNS,
HENNESSEY, BOBACK, BIZZARRO, ROZZI, KINSEY, DIGIROLAMO,
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D. COSTA, YOUNGBLOOD, KORTZ, SCHLOSSBERG, DAVIS AND MOUL,
FEBRUARY 10, 2016

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
FEBRUARY 10, 2016

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of February 2016 as "Zika Virus Awareness
2 Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, A relatively new mosquito-borne virus is prompting
4 worldwide concern because of an alarming connection to a
5 neurological birth disorder and the rapid spread of the virus
6 across the globe; and

7 WHEREAS, The Zika virus, transmitted by the aggressive Aedes
8 aegypti mosquito, is a flavivirus, which is part of the same
9 family as yellow fever, West Nile, chikungunya and dengue; and

10 WHEREAS, Unlike some of those viruses, there is no vaccine to
11 prevent Zika or medicine to treat the infection; and

12 WHEREAS, Zika is commanding worldwide attention because of an
13 alarming connection between the virus and microcephaly, a
14 neurological disorder that results in babies being born with

1 abnormally small heads causing severe developmental issues and
2 sometimes death; and

3 WHEREAS, The virus is transmitted and spread when an Aedes
4 aegypti mosquito with an active infection bites a person who
5 then becomes a carrier during the time they have symptoms; and

6 WHEREAS, A rare case of the Zika virus being sexually
7 transmitted has been reported in the United States; and

8 WHEREAS, In most people, symptoms of the virus are mild and
9 include fever, headache, rash and possible pink eye; and

10 WHEREAS, In fact, 80% of those infected never know they have
11 the disease, which is especially concerning for pregnant women,
12 as this virus has now been shown to pass through amniotic fluid
13 to the fetus; and

14 WHEREAS, The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that
15 three million to four million people across the Americas will be
16 infected with the virus in the next year; and

17 WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC),
18 the virus has now spread to at least 24 countries, including
19 Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Cape Verde, Colombia, the Dominican
20 Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guadeloupe,
21 Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Panama,
22 Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Saint Martin, Suriname, Samoa, the U.S.
23 Virgin Islands and Venezuela; and

24 WHEREAS, According to the CDC, 31 people have been diagnosed
25 with the Zika virus in the United States; and

26 WHEREAS, All reported cases have occurred in travelers
27 returning from affected countries during the current outbreak
28 that began in 2015, with no cases of the virus being transmitted
29 within the United States; and

30 WHEREAS, According to pennlive.com, the primary mosquito that

1 carries Zika is not found in Pennsylvania; however, the Asian
2 tiger mosquito, a secondary type of mosquito that can carry the
3 disease, has been found in this Commonwealth; and

4 WHEREAS, Due to the rapid spread of this virus and the health
5 problems it is causing, WHO has declared a public health
6 emergency of international concern; and

7 WHEREAS, This declaration is intended to facilitate
8 international coordination of tracking, research and response to
9 the virus and its effects; and

10 WHEREAS, While there is no vaccine or treatment for this
11 virus, researchers are hard at work in laboratories around the
12 world trying to create a Zika vaccine, and a clinical trial for
13 a Zika vaccine could begin this year according to Dr. Anthony
14 Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and
15 Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health; and

16 WHEREAS, Another prevention treatment effort is OX513A, the
17 creation of a British company Oxitec, which is a genetically
18 modified male *Aedes aegypti* or "mutant mosquito," which is
19 designed to stop the spread of the Zika virus by passing along a
20 gene that causes offspring to die; and

21 WHEREAS, According to the United States Food and Drug
22 Administration (FDA), the OX513A genetically engineered mosquito
23 has been approved for use in Brazil, and open field trials of
24 these mosquitoes have been conducted in Brazil, the Cayman
25 Islands, Panama and Malaysia; and

26 WHEREAS, In 2011, field trials were conducted in Brazil as a
27 way to combat an outbreak of dengue, and according to Oxitec,
28 the trials were hugely successful, eliminating up to 99% of the
29 target mosquito population; and

30 WHEREAS, The FDA is reviewing the draft environmental

1 assessment along with other information on the Oxitec mosquito
2 in consultation with government experts from other agencies,
3 including the CDC and the Environmental Protection Agency in
4 order to conduct trials in the United States; and

5 WHEREAS, According to the CDC, with no treatment or vaccine
6 available, the only protection against the virus is to avoid
7 traveling to areas with an active infestation; and

8 WHEREAS, The CDC has recommended to all those traveling to a
9 country where Zika is present to strictly adhere to mosquito
10 protection measures, which include using an EPA-approved
11 repellent over sunscreen, wearing long pants and long-sleeved
12 shirts thick enough to block a mosquito bite and sleeping in
13 air-conditioned or screened rooms; and

14 WHEREAS, The CDC is also encouraging local homeowners, hotel
15 owners and visitors in countries with Zika outbreaks to
16 eliminate any standing water, such as water in outdoor buckets
17 and flowerpots; therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize
19 February 2016 as "Zika Virus Awareness Month" and support
20 global, Federal and State efforts to promote awareness and
21 prevention of the Zika virus, and the development of treatments,
22 vaccines and a cure.