
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 554 Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY DONATUCCI, DEAN, BAKER, READSHAW, NEILSON,
SOLOMON, HENNESSEY, TOOHIL, BIZZARRO, YOUNGBLOOD, MURT,
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HILL, WARREN, GILLEN, BRADFORD, THOMAS AND D. COSTA,
OCTOBER 10, 2017

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
OCTOBER 10, 2017

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;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, There are three groups of women who have the
3 greatest risk of preterm labor and birth: women who have had a
4 previous preterm birth, women who are pregnant with twins or
5 higher order multiples and women with certain uterine or
6 cervical abnormalities; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 WHEREAS, With a 2016 preterm birth rate of 9.6%, Pennsylvania
29 received a "C" on its report card, indicating improvement in the
30 past years, yet the need for a reduction in the number of

1 preterm births in this Commonwealth still exists; and

2 WHEREAS, Although babies may survive preterm birth, some may
3 require special medical care requiring weeks or months of
4 hospitalization, and these babies often face adverse health
5 conditions over the course of their lives, including chronic
6 respiratory problems, cerebral palsy, a higher risk of a
7 learning disability, behavioral and intellectual disabilities,
8 vision and hearing loss, feeding and digestive problems, sensory
9 and motor deficits, infections and cardiovascular diseases or
10 diabetes, compared to their full-term counterparts; and

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

14 WHEREAS, Prematurity is the leading cause of death for
15 newborn babies, and, compared to most industrialized countries,
16 the United States has a high rate of preterm birth; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2014, more than 380,000 preterm births occurred
18 in this nation; and

19 WHEREAS, Although doctors have made exceptional progress in
20 the care of premature babies, more research is needed to
21 increase the medical community's understanding of the risk
22 factors for premature birth; and

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

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize
28 November 17, 2017, as "World Prematurity Day" in Pennsylvania
29 and acknowledge the serious public health concern of prematurity
30 in birth and the compelling need to reduce the incidence of

1 preterm births in this Commonwealth; and be it further
2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commend the staff
3 and volunteers of the March of Dimes for their considerable
4 efforts toward preventing preterm birth, infant mortality and
5 birth defects by educating and supporting women and families
6 regarding healthy birth.