

By Representative Waters

1 House Resolution

2 A resolution recognizing April 22-29, 2001, as
3 "Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week."

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5 WHEREAS, government figures show that more than 1
6 million children were victims of abuse and neglect in 1997,
7 causing unspeakable pain and suffering to our most vulnerable
8 citizens, and

9 WHEREAS, of the children who are victims of abuse and
10 neglect, more than three die each day in this country, and

11 WHEREAS, the rate of child fatalities rose by 37
12 percent between 1985 and 1997, and children who were 3 years
13 old or younger accounted for 77 percent of the fatalities, and

14 WHEREAS, the leading cause of death of abused children
15 is head trauma, including the trauma known as Shaken Baby
16 Syndrome, and

17 WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome, which results from a
18 caregiver's losing control and shaking a baby, usually less
19 than 1 year of age, and which can cause loss of vision, brain
20 damage, paralysis, seizures, or death, is a totally
21 preventable form of child abuse, and

22 WHEREAS, an estimated 3,000 children are diagnosed with
23 Shaken Baby Syndrome every year, and thousands more are
24 misdiagnosed and undetected, and

25 WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome often causes permanent,
26 irreparable brain damage or death to an infant, and may result
27 in more than \$1 million in medical costs for the care of a
28 single disabled child during the first few years of life, and

29 WHEREAS, the most effective way to end Shaken Baby
30 Syndrome is by preventing such abuse, and it is clear that the
31 minimal costs of educational and preventive programs may avert

1 enormous medical and disability costs and untold grief for
2 many families, and

3 WHEREAS, prevention programs have been shown to raise
4 awareness and provide critically important information about
5 Shaken Baby Syndrome to parents, caregivers, daycare workers,
6 child protection employees, law enforcement personnel, health
7 care professionals, and legal representatives, and

8 WHEREAS, prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome is
9 supported by groups such as the Shaken Baby Alliance, an
10 organization started by three mothers of children who had been
11 diagnosed with Shaken Baby Syndrome, and whose mission is to
12 educate the general public and professionals about the
13 syndrome and to increase support for victims and their
14 families in the health care and criminal justice systems, and

15 WHEREAS, a year 2000 survey by Prevent Child Abuse
16 America shows that half of all Americans believe that child
17 abuse and neglect is the most important issue facing this
18 country, compared to other public health issues, and

19 WHEREAS, the Florida House of Representatives strongly
20 supports efforts to protect children from abuse and neglect,
21 NOW, THEREFORE,

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23 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
24 Florida:

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26 That the Florida House of Representatives recognizes
27 the week of April 22-29, 2001, as "Shaken Baby Syndrome
28 Awareness Week."

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