

HR 9141

2005

House Resolution

A resolution designating April 5, 2005, as "Joey Bergsma Retinoblastoma Awareness Day" in Florida.

WHEREAS, little Joseph Hollander Bergsma ("Joey," or "Little Button") was born July 5, 1997, a child with a zest for living and a love for animals and nature, music, dancing, and painting, whose favorite song was "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and who, just over one week after his second birthday, was diagnosed with the most common of childhood intraocular malignancies, retinoblastoma, a malignant tumor of the retina thought to be hereditary, most likely arising from retinal germ cells, and

WHEREAS, retinoblastoma, like some of the other eye disorders in children, must be diagnosed at an early age to prevent loss of vision and optimize treatment outcomes, and

WHEREAS, oftentimes made difficult by the unwilling participation of young children, the complexity of some diagnoses, and the lack of specialized training, expertise, and examination equipment, most significant eye problems in children, including retinoblastoma, can nevertheless be identified with effective screening techniques, and

WHEREAS, unilateral retinoblastoma normally presents after 18 months of age and can present as late as 5 years, and the best opportunity to obtain earlier detection of the tumor is by educating pediatricians and parents alike, stressing in particular family history and the importance and method of checking for a red reflex under dim illumination, and

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29 WHEREAS, parents, who have repeated eye contact with their
30 children, may perceive subtle abnormalities in the papillary
31 light reflex or eye alignment that may not be detectable in an
32 office setting, or they may observe an abnormality in
33 photographs of their children, either of which demands immediate
34 evaluation by an eye specialist, and

35 WHEREAS, on December 22, 2000, little Joey Bergsma lost his
36 valiant battle against retinoblastoma, but not before he won a
37 victory for countless children throughout our world who need no
38 longer face heartbreaking blindness and death resulting from
39 treatable eye diseases, NOW, THEREFORE,

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41 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
42 Florida:

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44 That April 5, 2005, is designated "Joey Bergsma
45 Retinoblastoma Awareness Day" in Florida, and all residents of
46 the state are urged to make themselves aware of the effects,
47 symptoms, and treatment of this and other childhood eye
48 diseases.