

HR 9119

2006

## House Resolution

A resolution recognizing April 16-22, 2006, as "Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week" in Florida.

WHEREAS, government statistics show that, in 2000, unspeakable pain and suffering were inflicted upon more than 880,000 children, our nation's most vulnerable citizens, as victims of abuse and neglect, and, on an average day in the United States, four of these hapless children die, and

WHEREAS, the leading cause of death among abused children is inflicted head trauma, including that trauma known as Shaken Baby Syndrome, which occurs when a caregiver shakes a baby or young child, most frequently less than 1 year of age but in some cases as old as 5 years, with the resultant loss of vision, brain damage, paralysis, seizures, or death, and

WHEREAS, on average, 1,200 to 1,400 children in the United States are diagnosed with Shaken Baby Syndrome each year, with thousands of additional cases thought to be misdiagnosed or undetected, and substantial medical evidence seems to indicate that, even when injuries resulting from this form of abuse are moderate, such injuries and similar trauma are likely to cause learning disabilities in children and to substantially increase their vulnerability to substance abuse, and

WHEREAS, during the first few years of the life of a single child disabled by its having been shaken, medical and rehabilitation costs may amount to more than a million dollars, with annual national costs of child abuse estimated at more than \$92 billion, and Florida Medicaid would likely bear some of the

HR 9119

2006

29 | medical and rehabilitation costs associated with Shaken Baby  
30 | Syndrome injuries, and

31 |         WHEREAS, the most effective way to end Shaken Baby Syndrome  
32 | is by preventing such abuse, and, inasmuch as awareness and  
33 | prevention programs have provided critically important  
34 | information to parents, caregivers, daycare workers, child  
35 | protection employees, law enforcement personnel, health care  
36 | professionals, and legal representatives, it is clear that the  
37 | minimal costs of such programs may avert enormous medical and  
38 | disability expenditures as well as untold grief for many  
39 | families, and

40 |         WHEREAS, prevention programs such as the Pennsylvania and  
41 | Upstate New York Shaken Baby Prevention Projects have  
42 | demonstrated that educating new parents about the danger of  
43 | shaking young children and how they can help protect their child  
44 | from injury can effect a significant reduction in the number of  
45 | Shaken Baby Syndrome cases, and

46 |         WHEREAS, training and education for child care providers  
47 | and high school and middle school students who are frequently  
48 | employed as paid or unpaid babysitters are also effective in  
49 | helping them keep young children safe from injury, and

50 |         WHEREAS, such national groups as the National Shaken Baby  
51 | Coalition, the Shaken Baby Alliance, the SKIPPER Initiative, and  
52 | the National Center for Shaken Baby Syndrome are experiencing  
53 | great success in their mission to educate new parents and  
54 | caregivers, increase awareness among the general public and  
55 | professionals, and encourage increased support for victims and  
56 | their families in the health care and criminal justice systems;

HR 9119

2006

57 | and the selfless commitment and Herculean efforts of those  
58 | working in agencies of state, county, and local governments are  
59 | making great strides toward the eradication of this and all  
60 | forms of child abuse, NOW, THEREFORE,

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62 | Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of  
63 | Florida:

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65 |       That the House of Representatives commends those advocates  
66 | and organizations and the agencies of state, county, and local  
67 | governments that are committed to fostering an awareness among  
68 | parents and caregivers of the causes, consequences, and  
69 | prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and other inflicted abuse and  
70 | recognizes April 16-22, 2006, as "Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness  
71 | Week" in Florida.