

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 518

Designating the third week of April 2008 as “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 16, 2008

Mr. DODD (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

APRIL 21, 2008

Committee discharged; considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating the third week of April 2008 as “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week”.

Whereas the month of April has been designated “National Child Abuse Prevention Month” as an annual tradition initiated in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter;

Whereas the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System figures reveal that more than 900,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the United States in 2006, causing unspeakable pain and suffering for our most vulnerable citizens;

Whereas more than 4 children die as a result of abuse or neglect in the United States each day;

Whereas children younger than 1 year old accounted for approximately 44 percent of all child abuse and neglect fatalities in 2006, and children younger than 3 years old accounted for approximately 78 percent of all child abuse and neglect fatalities in 2006;

Whereas abusive head trauma, including the trauma known as Shaken Baby Syndrome, is recognized as the leading cause of death among physically abused children;

Whereas Shaken Baby Syndrome can result in loss of vision, brain damage, paralysis, seizures, or death;

Whereas 20 States have enacted statutes related to preventing and increasing awareness of Shaken Baby Syndrome;

Whereas medical professionals believe that thousands of additional cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome and other forms of abusive head trauma are being misdiagnosed or are undetected;

Whereas Shaken Baby Syndrome often results in permanent, irreparable brain damage or death of an infant and may result in extraordinary costs for medical care in only the first few years of the life of the child;

Whereas the most effective solution for preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome is to prevent the abuse, and it is clear that the minimal costs of education and prevention programs may prevent enormous medical and disability costs and immeasurable amounts of grief for many families;

Whereas prevention programs have demonstrated that educating new parents about the danger of shaking young children and how to protect their children from injury can significantly reduce the number of cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome;

Whereas education programs raise awareness and provide critically important information about Shaken Baby Syndrome to parents, caregivers, childcare providers, child protection employees, law enforcement personnel, health care professionals, and legal representatives;

Whereas National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week and efforts to prevent child abuse, including Shaken Baby Syndrome, are supported by groups across the United States, including groups formed by parents and relatives of children who have been killed or injured by shaking, whose mission is to educate the general public and professionals about Shaken Baby Syndrome and to increase support for victims and the families of the victims in the health care and criminal justice systems;

Whereas the Senate previously designated the third week of April 2007 as “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week”; and

Whereas the Senate strongly supports efforts to protect children from abuse and neglect: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates the third week of April 2008 as
3 “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness
4 Week”;

5 (2) commends hospitals, child care councils,
6 schools, community groups, and other organizations
7 that are—

8 (A) working to increase awareness of the
9 danger of shaking young children;

1 (B) educating parents and caregivers on
2 how they can help protect children from injuries
3 caused by abusive shaking; and

4 (C) helping families cope effectively with
5 the challenges of child-rearing and other
6 stresses in their lives; and

7 (3) encourages the people of the United
8 States—

9 (A) to remember the victims of Shaken
10 Baby Syndrome; and

11 (B) to participate in educational programs
12 to help prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome.

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