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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 24

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 2, 2008

Designating October, in 2008 and in each succeeding year, as Dyslexia Awareness Month in Virginia.

Patron—Ruff

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, after extensive research, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has developed a definition of dyslexia, which is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and language decoding abilities; and

WHEREAS, the International Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as a neurologically based, often familial disorder that interferes with the acquisition and processing of language; and

WHEREAS, the NIH has found that dyslexia is the most common and prevalent learning disability, affecting one out of every five children in the United States; and

WHEREAS, there are a multitude of common misconceptions regarding dyslexia, which is not a disorder that stems from a lack of motivation, impairment of eyesight or hearing, or educational, instructional, and environmental opportunities, though the addition of these conditions can add to learning difficulties; and

WHEREAS, dyslexic children do not see words or letters backwards as previously believed, and the disorder been shown to be clearly related to neuropsychological differences in brain function; and

WHEREAS, dyslexia causes difficulty in receptive and expressive language, and symptoms often include difficulty in phonological processing, reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, and sometimes math skills; and

WHEREAS, of children who display reading problems in the first grade, 74 percent will be poor readers in the ninth grade and into adulthood unless they receive informed and explicit instruction on phonemic awareness; and

WHEREAS, early diagnosis of dyslexia is essential, because it is the leading cause of reading failure and school dropouts in the nation; and

WHEREAS, diagnosed in as many boys as girls, children with dyslexia do not outgrow reading failure or the underlying disorder; and

WHEREAS, dyslexia and attention deficit disorder are two separate and identifiable disorders that frequently co-exist; and

WHEREAS, people who have suffered from dyslexia come from every walk of life and countless successful entrepreneurs, artists, musicians, and leaders in sports, science, medicine, and politics have had the disorder, including Walt Disney, Steven Spielberg, Magic Johnson, Beethoven, John F. Kennedy, Galileo, John Lennon, Albert Einstein, Mark Twain, Jules Verne, Henry Ford, Ansel Adams, Nolan Ryan, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Leonardo da Vinci, Agatha Christie, Thomas Edison, Louis Pasteur, Anwar Sadat, Charles Darwin, Winston Churchill, Benjamin Franklin, Muhammad Ali, and many others; and

WHEREAS, the testing used by the nation's public schools to establish a student's eligibility for special education services is often inadequate in identifying dyslexia and increased awareness by parents, teachers, school administrators, and the public is essential to ensure that every child receives the testing, health care, and appropriate instruction they need to succeed academically and lead a happy and rewarding life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate October, in 2008 and in each succeeding year, as Dyslexia Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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