

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 26

Designating May 4 through 10, in 2022 and in each succeeding year, as Late Onset Hearing Loss Awareness Week in Virginia.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 27, 2022

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 8, 2022

WHEREAS, late onset hearing loss, defined as hearing loss occurring after birth and before kindergarten, often goes undiagnosed and untreated in childhood due to lack of awareness and infrequency of early childhood hearing screenings; and

WHEREAS, late onset hearing loss may develop in infants, toddlers, and young children who have already passed a newborn hearing screening test; a hearing screening at birth may fail to detect mild hearing loss or the onset of hearing loss may not occur until after infancy; and

WHEREAS, the factors causing late onset hearing loss are varied and include genetic causes, childhood syndromes, congenital illness, infections, exposure to ototoxic medications, head trauma, and exposure to excessive noise; however, the cause of late onset hearing loss is not always known; and

WHEREAS, hearing plays a vital role in childhood development, and undetected late onset hearing loss leads to developmental delays, speech and language difficulties, and social and emotional problems that can only be addressed once hearing loss is known to be a cause; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated decrease in in-person education, medical treatment, and other social interactions have increased the likelihood that late onset hearing loss will go undetected for longer in many children; and

WHEREAS, it is important to quickly diagnose late onset hearing loss so that appropriate developmental management can be provided, hearing loss progression can be monitored, and amplification and communication options can be reviewed by a child's family, caretakers, and professionals who support the child; and

WHEREAS, awareness of late onset hearing loss will help parents, families, guardians, teachers, child-care providers, and pediatricians to discuss and assess a child's developmental milestones, regularly monitor hearing health and seek hearing evaluations, and learn about resources, treatment, and intervention services to address the needs and improve the lives of children with late onset hearing loss; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate May 4 through 10, in 2022 and in each succeeding year, as Late Onset Hearing Loss Awareness Week in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to agencies and organizations that support families of children who are D/deaf and hard of hearing, including the Virginia Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program, the Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia, the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Association of the Deaf, the Virginia Academy of Pediatrics, the Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Virginia, the Center for Family Involvement at Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Hands and Voices, and the Virginia Chapter of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, so that these agencies and members of these organizations may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

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

ENROLLED

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