

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 348

Commending March of Dimes.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 16, 2023
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2023

WHEREAS, for 85 years, the nonprofit organization March of Dimes has worked to enhance the health and wellness of families around the nation by supporting research, leading programs, and providing advocacy and education; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes was founded by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938 to fight polio and fund the development of two vaccines, still in use today, that virtually eliminated the crippling disease; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, having achieved its initial mission, March of Dimes shifted its attention from polio to the prevention of birth defects, and through federal and state advocacy, the organization led the way in establishing a nationwide network of birth defect-monitoring programs and research centers; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes has undertaken decades of groundbreaking research in maternal and infant health, which has led to the discovery of lifesaving products and tests, such as surfactant therapy for premature infants and tests to identify life-threatening birth defects; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes has developed a collaborative model to study and prevent preterm birth through groundbreaking research at its five Prematurity Research Centers; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes was a pioneer in the support of newborn screening, urging the United States Congress to pass and fund the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, which in 2008 established national guidelines on the conditions states should include in newborn screening programs, and through state advocacy ensured that every state screens all newborns for that core set of conditions; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes is a longtime advocate for access to health care for women of childbearing age, infants, children, and families, ensuring they have access to quality, affordable health care before, during, and after pregnancy through programs such as the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid postpartum extension coverage, which provides coverage for one full year after childbirth; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes was a leading advocate for bipartisan legislation to ensure reasonable accommodations for pregnant people in the workplace, which led to the passage and enactment of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, March of Dimes launched the Prematurity Campaign to address the crisis of premature birth and help families have full-term, healthy babies; the organization authored the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education Act for Mothers (PREEMIE) Act, which Congress enacted in 2006 to expand research, education, and services to fight premature births; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes has set a national goal of reducing preterm birth to 8.1 percent in every state, which will result in a healthier start in life for tens of thousands of infants; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes sponsors numerous programs to support healthy pregnancies and infants, such as its work to prevent early elective deliveries and maternal mortality, as well as its NICU Family Support program; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes and its volunteers continue to advocate for national and state policies and programs to improve the health of women of childbearing age, infants, children, and families; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes is committed to mobilizing the nation by amplifying the voices of pregnant people and families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend March of Dimes on the occasion of its 85th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to March of Dimes as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation for the organization's critical mission and admiration for the hard work of its staff members, volunteers, and supporters.

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