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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 132

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 8, 2008

Designating March, in 2008 and in each succeeding year, as Brain Injury Awareness Month in Virginia.

Patrons—Nutter, Crockett-Stark, Fralin and Griffith

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, brain injury is a serious national public health problem that strikes an estimated 1.4 million Americans a year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and 20,000 of those who suffer injuries are Virginians; and

WHEREAS, a traumatic brain injury (TBI) is defined as a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain; and

WHEREAS, traumatic injury does not occur in all blows or jolts to the head, however, when it does, the severity of TBI may range from "mild," resulting in a brief change in mental status or consciousness, to "severe," resulting in an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia; TBI can also cause short or long-term problems with independent function; and

WHEREAS, of the 1.4 million people who sustain a TBI each year in the United States 50,000 die; 235,000 are hospitalized; and 1.1 million are treated and released from an emergency department; it is unknown how many people may suffer TBI and not seek care; and

WHEREAS, the leading causes of TBI are falls at 28%, motor vehicle-traffic crashes at 20%, events or accidents where people are struck or strike against something at 19%, and assaults at 11%; and

WHEREAS, the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center reports that TBI is the "signature injury" for troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, with more than two-thirds of blast-injured veterans identified as having a brain injury; and

WHEREAS, the effects of brain injury can be devastating, emotionally and financially, to victims and their families; and

WHEREAS, the CDC estimates that approximately 5.3 million Americans currently have long-term or lifelong need for assistance in performing every day activities as a result of TBI; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, the direct medical costs and indirect costs such as lost productivity resulting from TBI in the United States was estimated to be \$60 billion; and

WHEREAS, the average lifetime cost of care for a person with a severe traumatic brain injury ranges from \$600,000 to \$1,875,000; and

WHEREAS, many individuals with TBI can make significant contributions to their families, the Commonwealth and their communities, with the appropriate support system and vital services that are essential for them to function as valued citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, as the state agency designated to coordinate services for people with brain injury, works collaboratively with the Brain Injury Association of Virginia and other advocacy groups to meet the needs of Virginians with brain injury; and

WHEREAS, the Brain Injury Association of America recognizes March as National Brain Injury Awareness Month to enhance public awareness of the extent, causes, consequences, treatment, and prevention of brain injury; now, therefore, be it

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

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

INTRODUCED

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