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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 298

Offered January 9, 2019

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Designating August, in 2019 and in each succeeding year, as Breastfeeding Awareness Month in Virginia.

Patrons—McClellan, Boysko, Dance, Deeds, DeSteph, Dunnivant, Howell, Lucas and Mason

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, breastfeeding provides unique health, economic, and societal benefits to babies, mothers, families, and the community as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, and the World Health Organization recommend that babies be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of age and continue to be breastfed until 12 months of age or longer as mutually desired by the breastfeeding parent and infant; and

WHEREAS, in January 2011, the United States Surgeon General announced a "Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding" that identifies barriers to optimal breastfeeding in health care practices, employment, communities, research, public health infrastructure, and social networks, while also recommending methods by which families, communities, employers, and health care professionals could help to eliminate those barriers to improve breastfeeding rates and increase support for breastfeeding; and

WHEREAS, research shows that breastfeeding and human milk provide advantages to general health, growth, and development while significantly decreasing the risk of infant mortality and a large number of acute and chronic diseases, including, among others, sudden infant death syndrome, asthma, allergies, diabetes, viral and bacterial infections, childhood obesity, childhood leukemia, and necrotizing enterocolitis; and

WHEREAS, mothers who breastfeed have a decreased risk of breast, uterine, and ovarian cancer, postpartum depression, and osteoporosis later in life; and

WHEREAS, the nutrients exclusive to human milk are vital to the growth, development, and maintenance of the human brain and cannot be manufactured; and

WHEREAS, recent research estimates if 90 percent of American mothers could achieve optimal breastfeeding, it could prevent an estimated 2,619 premature maternal deaths and 721 child deaths, and save \$17.4 billion in maternal health costs and \$13 billion in child health costs each year; and

WHEREAS, breastfeeding has positive economic impacts on families by decreasing the need to pay for medical care for a sick infant and by eliminating the need to purchase infant formula; and

WHEREAS, the health benefits to breastfed children and their mothers result in lower health care costs for employers, less employee time off to care for sick children, and higher productivity and employee loyalty; and

WHEREAS, research suggests that breastfeeding facilitates and enhances bonding between parents and infants and may have a positive impact on long-term behavioral outcomes for children; and

WHEREAS, employers, employees, and society benefit by supporting a mother's decision to breastfeed and by helping to reduce the obstacles to initiating and continuing breastfeeding; and

WHEREAS, Virginians are encouraged to explore ways to improve women's access to breastfeeding support services in medical, social, and employment settings, to facilitate increased awareness and education about breastfeeding, to explore the use of breastfeeding supports, and to improve the availability of effective breastfeeding resources and community support services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate August, in 2019 and in each succeeding year, as Breastfeeding Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Virginia Department of Health so that the agency 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 month on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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