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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules
on February 1, 2024)

(Patrons Prior to Substitute—Delegates Sullivan and Delaney [HJ 37])

Designating October 25, in 2024 and in each succeeding year, as Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome Awareness Day in Virginia.

WHEREAS, the term postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, or POTS, was adopted in the early 1990s to describe a form of dysautonomia and orthostatic intolerance in which a person experiences excessive tachycardia and other symptoms upon standing; and

WHEREAS, along with an increased heart rate upon standing from a seated or reclined position, the cluster of symptoms associated with POTS includes fatigue, headaches, lightheadedness, heart palpitations, exercise intolerance, nausea, diminished concentration, shaking, fainting, coldness or pain in the extremities, chest pain, and shortness of breath; and

WHEREAS, for many individuals with POTS, their autonomic nervous systems do not adequately cause the blood vessels in the lower body to constrict to maintain a steady flow of blood to the heart and brain when they stand up, causing blood to pool in their lower extremities; and

WHEREAS, POTS may on some occasions be caused by a small fiber neuropathy that impacts the sudomotor nerves, but in other instances may be the result of an undefined autoimmune dysfunction or other unknown causes; and

WHEREAS, the severity of POTS fluctuates markedly among individuals, with some able to carry on their normal lives with mild symptoms and others significantly limited in their ability to manage basic life functions like walking, bathing, and eating; and

WHEREAS, physicians with expertise in treating POTS have compared the functional impairment seen in some POTS patients to that of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or congestive heart failure; and

WHEREAS, POTS symptoms may worsen in the presence of other illnesses and in severe cases prevent a person from being upright for more than a couple of minutes, affecting them in all aspects of personal, school, work, and social life; and

WHEREAS, POTS is not easily diagnosed because each patient experiences a different array of symptoms and the root cause of the syndrome cannot always be determined; currently, doctors may rely on a table tilt test to reach a diagnosis, in which a person's vitals are measured while they are gradually tilted from a reclined to standing position; and

WHEREAS, POTS patients have been regularly misdiagnosed as having anxiety or similar psychological disorders, in large part due to the limited awareness of POTS and its related symptoms, and past treatments have often aggravated rather than alleviated a patient's condition; and

WHEREAS, patients of color represent only about five percent of the population diagnosed with POTS, suggesting that discrimination in the health care system has resulted in many individuals living with POTS without a diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that the patient population affected by POTS increased from 3 million to 6 million Americans as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many individuals experiencing long COVID-19 symptoms also suffering from POTS; and

WHEREAS, POTS has not been adequately studied by the National Institutes of Health and other organizations relative to other disorders affecting smaller patient populations; and

WHEREAS, an increase in research devoted to POTS and promotional campaigns spreading awareness of the disorder has the potential to greatly improve the quality of life for many; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate October 25, in 2024 and in each succeeding year, as Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome Awareness Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to Dysautonomia International so that members of the organization be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

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

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