

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 34

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 24

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 34—Relative to Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 23, 2007.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 34, Nakanishi. Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.

This measure recognizes April 15 to April 21, 2007, inclusive, as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.”

WHEREAS, The 550,995 children born in California every year are our most vulnerable citizens; and

WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes that babies, infants, and toddlers are especially vulnerable to “Shaken Baby Syndrome,” the pattern of injury that results from an act of violent shaking by a parent or caregiver, but that children as old as five years of age can be injured by such acts of shaking; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome and other inflicted head trauma is now recognized as a leading cause of child fatalities; and

WHEREAS, Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, report that children between the ages of birth and five months are at the greatest risk of injury and death due to abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, A 2003 report in the Journal of the American Medical Association surveyed the incidence of Shaken Baby Syndrome and estimates that an average of 300 children will die and 600 to 1,200 more children will be injured, with many cases resulting in severe and permanent disabilities, including loss of vision, brain damage, paralysis, and seizures; and

WHEREAS, Medical professionals believe that thousands more cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome are being misdiagnosed or not detected; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that during an average year in California, nearly 230 children under five years of age will require medical attention because of inflicted head injuries, of which two-thirds are likely to occur in babies or infants younger than one year of age; and

WHEREAS, These inflicted injuries are usually precipitated when a parent or caregiver is not prepared to cope with the frustration and anger that can result from the inconsolable crying of an infant or unrealistic expectations of a child's behavior; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that 10 to 20 percent of infants experience episodes of colic, characterized by inconsolable crying for more than three hours a day for more than three weeks, meaning that every year between

55,000 and 100,000 Californian babies may have such sustained periods of crying, with commensurate stress for their caregivers; and

WHEREAS, A survey conducted by Prevent Child Abuse America found that one-half of Americans with children believe parents do find themselves in situations where they are afraid they might abuse or neglect their child; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome and other inflicted injuries are totally preventable; and

WHEREAS, The medical costs of treating Shaken Baby Syndrome cases and the costs of rehabilitation services to surviving infants, may exceed more than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) for the care of a single disabled child during the first few years of life; and

WHEREAS, The costs of those services are primarily paid by the Medi-Cal program, which in the year 2000 paid for 42.4 percent of births in the state, and by private health insurers, resulting in higher taxes and health insurance costs for all citizens of the state; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome cases further impact costs to communities in many ways, including the investigation and prosecution of SBS cases, the tragic disruption of families, and the special education needs that are frequently required by those who have survived even modest head traumas; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention programs have demonstrated that educating new parents about the danger of shaking young children and how they can help protect their child from injury can effect a significant reduction in the number of Shaken Baby Syndrome cases; and

WHEREAS, Training and education for child care providers, as well as our high school and middle school pupils, who are frequently employed as paid or unpaid babysitters, is also effective in helping keep young children safe from injury; and

WHEREAS, The minimal costs and effort involved in such educational and preventive programs avert enormous medical and disability costs and untold grief for many families; and

WHEREAS, Efforts to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome are supported by numerous organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Exchange Club, Kiwanis International, the Children's Trust Fund, Parents' Action, Healthy Start Coalition, as well as advocacy groups formed by parents and relatives of children who have been killed or injured by shaking, such as the Hannah Rose Foundation, the National Shaken Baby Coalition, the Shaken Baby Association, the SKIPPER Initiative, and the Shaken Baby Alliance; and

WHEREAS, The California Assembly and Senate strongly support efforts to protect our children, especially by education and awareness activities that enable parents to keep their children safe from injury; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the California Assembly and the Senate recognize the

week of April 15 to April 21, 2007, inclusive, as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” in the State of California; and be it further

Resolved, That the California Assembly and the Senate request that the Governor proclaim the week of April 15 to April 21, 2007, inclusive, as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” in the State of California; and be it further

Resolved, That the California Assembly and the Senate encourage the Legislature and the Governor to undertake all practicable efforts to educate new parents, child care providers, foster and adoptive parents, babysitters, and others who care for our children about Shaken Baby Syndrome, including the causes and consequences of shaking injuries, the need to be prepared to cope with frustration and anger, and the need to educate all other caregivers of a child about the danger of shaking and ways they can help protect that child from injury; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.