

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 136

Introduced by Assembly Member Ma

March 21, 2012

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 136—Relative to Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 136, as introduced, Ma. Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.

This measure recognizes April 15 to April 21, 2012, inclusive, as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week.”

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, In California, over 500,000 babies are born every
2 year; and

3 WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes
4 that babies, infants, and toddlers are especially vulnerable to
5 abusive head trauma, also known as “Shaken Baby Syndrome,”
6 the pattern of injury that results from an act of violent shaking by
7 a parent or caregiver; and

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

11 WHEREAS, Researchers at the University of California, Irvine,
12 report that babies younger than five months of age are at the
13 greatest risk of injury and death due to abuse or neglect; and

14 WHEREAS, A 2003 report in the Journal of the American
15 Medical Association surveyed the incidence of Shaken Baby

1 Syndrome and estimated that an average of 300 children will die
2 each year from Shaken Baby Syndrome and 600 to 1,200 more
3 children will be injured; and

4 WHEREAS, Medical professionals believe that there are
5 thousands of cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome that are
6 misdiagnosed or undetected; and

7 WHEREAS, It is estimated that during an average year in
8 California, 220 to 280 children under five years of age will require
9 medical attention because of inflicted head injuries, and two-thirds
10 of these injuries are likely to occur in babies or infants younger
11 than one year of age; and

12 WHEREAS, Roughly one-third of the victims of Shaken Baby
13 Syndrome will suffer from developmental problems, including
14 partial or total blindness, hearing loss, seizures, speech and learning
15 difficulties, paralysis, and severe intellectual disability; and

16 WHEREAS, The infliction injuries often occurs when a parent
17 or caregiver is not prepared to cope with the frustration and anger
18 that can result from the inconsolable crying of an infant or
19 unrealistic expectations of a child's behavior; and

20 WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome and the injuries inflicted
21 are preventable; and

22 WHEREAS, The medical costs of treating Shaken Baby
23 Syndrome cases and the costs of rehabilitation services to surviving
24 infants average between \$18,000 and \$70,000 for initial
25 hospitalizations, and may exceed more than \$1,000,000 for the
26 care of a single disabled child over the course of his or her lifetime;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, The lifetime cost of the estimated 220 to 280
29 Shaken Baby Syndrome victims each year in California ranges
30 between \$78,000,000 and \$104,000,000; and

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

36 WHEREAS, At least 75 percent of Shaken Baby Syndrome
37 victims are Medi-Cal recipients when they are diagnosed; and

38 WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome cases further impose costs
39 to communities in many ways, including the investigation and
40 prosecution of Shaken Baby Syndrome cases, the tragic disruption

1 of families, and the special education needs that are frequently
2 required by those who have survived even modest head traumas;
3 and

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

9 WHEREAS, The minimal costs and effort of these educational
10 and preventative programs avert enormous medical and disability
11 costs and untold grief for many families; and

12 WHEREAS, Efforts to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome are
13 supported by numerous organizations, including the National
14 Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, the San Francisco Shaken Baby
15 Syndrome Prevention Project, the San Francisco Child Abuse
16 Prevention Center, the Hannah Rose Foundation, and the Greater
17 Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition; now,
18 therefore, be it

19 *Resolved, by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
20 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature strongly supports efforts
21 to protect our children, especially through education and awareness
22 activities that enable parents to keep their children safe from injury
23 and neglect; and be it further

24 *Resolved*, That the Legislature recognizes the week of April 15
25 to April 21, 2012, inclusive, as “Shaken Baby Syndrome
26 Awareness Week” in the State of California; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Legislature requests that the Governor
28 proclaim the week of April 15 to April 21, 2012, inclusive, as
29 “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” in the State of
30 California; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That the Legislature shall undertake, and encourages
32 the Governor to undertake, all practicable efforts to educate new
33 parents, child care providers, foster and adoptive parents,
34 babysitters, and other persons who care for our children about
35 Shaken Baby Syndrome, including the causes and consequences
36 of shaking injuries, the need to be prepared to cope with frustration
37 and anger, and the need to educate all other caregivers of a child
38 about the danger of shaking and ways they can help protect that
39 child from injury; and be it further

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

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