INTRODUCED

April 2, 2009

**S. 675**

Introduced by Senator Ryberg

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Read the first time April 2, 2009.

**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO DESIGNATE THE THIRD WEEK IN APRIL 2009 AS “SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME AWARENESS WEEK” TO RAISE AWARENESS REGARDING SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME AND TO COMMEND THE HOSPITALS, CHILD CARE COUNCILS, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT EDUCATE PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ON HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE.

Whereas, the month of April has been designated “National Child Abuse Prevention Month” as an annual tradition that was initiated in 1979 by former President Jimmy Carter; and

Whereas, the most recent National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System figures reveal that almost 900,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the United States in 2002, causing unspeakable pain and suffering to our most vulnerable citizens; and

Whereas, among the children who are victims of abuse and neglect, nearly four children die in the United States each day; and

Whereas, children aged one year or younger accounted for forty-one percent of all child abuse and neglect fatalities in 2002, and children aged four years or younger accounted for seventy-six percent of all child abuse and neglect fatalities in 2002; and

Whereas, abusive head trauma, including the trauma known as “Shaken Baby Syndrome”, is recognized as the leading cause of death of physically abused children; and

Whereas, Shaken Baby Syndrome can result in loss of vision, brain damage, paralysis, seizures, or death; and

Whereas, a 2003 report in the Journal of the American Medical Association estimated that in the United States, an average of 300 children will die each year, and 600 to 1,200 more will be injured, of whom two-thirds will be babies or infants under one year in age, as a result of Shaken Baby Syndrome, with many cases resulting in severe and permanent disabilities; and

Whereas, medical professionals believe that thousands of additional cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome are being misdiagnosed or not detected; and

Whereas, Shaken Baby Syndrome may result in more than $1,000,000 in medical costs to care for a single, disabled child in just the first few years of life; and

Whereas, the most effective solution for ending Shaken Baby Syndrome is to prevent the abuse, and it is clear that the minimal costs of education and prevention programs may prevent enormous medical and disability costs and immeasurable amounts of grief for many families; and

Whereas, 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 bring about a significant reduction in the number of cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome; and

Whereas, education programs have been shown to raise awareness and provide critically important information about Shaken Baby Syndrome to parents, caregivers, daycare workers, child protection employees, law enforcement personnel, health care professionals, and legal representatives; and

Whereas efforts to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome are supported by advocacy groups across the United States that were formed by parents and relatives of children who have been killed or injured by shaking, including the National Shaken Baby Coalition, the Shaken Baby Association, the Shaking Kills: Instead Parents Please Educate and Remember Initiative, commonly known as the “SKIPPER Initiative”, the Shaken Baby Alliance, Shaken Baby Prevention, Inc., A Voice for Gabbi, Don’t Shake Jake, the Kierra Harrison Foundation, and the Hannah Rose Foundation, whose mission is to educate the general public and professionals about Shaken Baby Syndrome and to increase support for victims and the families of the victims in the health care and criminal justice systems; and

Whereas, child abuse prevention programs and “National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” are supported by the National Shaken Baby Coalition, the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, the Children’s Defense Fund, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Child Welfare League of America, Prevent Child Abuse America, the National Child Abuse Coalition, the National Exchange Club Foundation, the American Humane Association, the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, the Arc of the United States, the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Children’s Healthcare is a Legal Duty, Family Partnership, Family Voices, National Alliance of Children’s Trust and Prevention Funds, United Cerebral Palsy, the National Association of Children’s Hospitals and related institutions, Never Shake a Baby Arizona, Prevent Child Abuse Arizona, the Center for Child Protection and Family Support, and many other organizations; and

Whereas, a 2000 survey by Prevent Child Abuse America shows that approximately half of all citizens of the United States believe that, of all the public health issues facing the United States, child abuse and neglect is the most important issue; and

Whereas, it would be appropriate to observe the third week of April 2009 as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week”. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the General Assembly of South Carolina, by this resolution, designate the third week of April 2009 as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” to raise awareness regarding Shaken Baby Syndrome and commend the hospitals, child care councils, schools, and other organizations that educate parents and caregivers on how to protect children from abuse.

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