

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John W. Scibak

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act to designate shaken baby syndrome awareness week.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
John W. Scibak	2nd Hampshire

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME AWARENESS WEEK.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Whereas, The most recent National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System figures reveal that almost
2 900,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the United States in 2005, causing unspeakable
3 pain and suffering to our most vulnerable citizens;

4
5 Whereas, Among the children who are victims of abuse and neglect, nearly four children die in the
6 United States each day;

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8 Whereas, Abusive head trauma, including the trauma known as "Shaken Baby Syndrome", is recognized
9 as the leading cause of death of physically abused children;

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

13
14 Whereas, A recent report in the Journal of the American Medical Association estimated that, in the
15 United States, an average of 300 children will die each year, and 600 to 1,200 more will be injured, of
16 whom two-thirds will be infants under 1 year in age, as a result of Shaken Baby Syndrome, with many
17 cases resulting in severe and permanent disabilities;

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19 Whereas, Medical professionals believe that thousands of additional cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome
20 are being misdiagnosed or not detected;

21
22 Whereas, Shaken Baby Syndrome often results in permanent, irreparable brain damage or death to an
23 infant and many result in more than \$1,000,000 in medical costs to care for a single, disabled child in
24 just the few first years of life;

25

26 Whereas, The most effective solution for ending Shaken Baby Syndrome is to prevent the abuse, and it
27 is clear that the minimal costs of education and prevention programs may preclude enormous medical
28 and disability costs as well as immeasurable amounts of grief for families;
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30 Whereas, Prevention programs have demonstrated that educating new parents about injury prevention
31 and the danger of shaking young children can bring about a significant reduction in the number of cases
32 of Shaken Baby Syndrome;
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34 Whereas, Education programs have been shown to raise awareness and provide critically important
35 information about Shaken Baby Syndrome to parents, caregivers, daycare workers, child protection
36 employees, law enforcement personnel, health care professionals, and legal representatives; *and*
37

38 Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide
39 forthwith for the annual observance of Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week,
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41 Therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of
42 the public convenience.
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44 SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition, is hereby amended
45 by inserting after section 15CCCCC, the following section: -

46 SECTION 15 DDDDD. The Governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart the third full week
47 in April as "Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week" in recognition of the number children and families
48 in the Commonwealth affected by Shaken Baby Syndrome and the need for increased public awareness,
49 research and support for victims and their families, and recommending that the week be observed in an
50 appropriate manner by the people.
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