

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 141

BY SENATOR CLAITOR AND REPRESENTATIVES CARTER AND FOIL

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To designate June 1, 2012, as Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day in Louisiana and to name the Brett and Melanie Williams Family as 2012 Louisiana Congenital Heart Defect Ambassadors.

WHEREAS, congenital heart defects are the number-one birth defect worldwide and the number-one cause of birth-defect-related deaths worldwide; and

WHEREAS, about one out of every one hundred babies are born each year with some type of congenital heart defect (CHD) in the United States, approximately forty thousand a year; and

WHEREAS, in addition, nearly twice as many American children die from CHDs each year as from all forms of childhood cancers combined, yet funding for pediatric-cancer research is five times higher than funding for CHDs; and

WHEREAS, although research is ongoing, at least thirty-five CHDs have been identified, some of which are diagnosed during gestation or at birth, others of which are not detected until days, weeks, months, or even years after; and

WHEREAS, critically, it is a proven fact that the earlier a CHD is detected and treated, the likelier it is that an affected child will survive and have fewer long-term health complications; and

WHEREAS, of the CHDs, Hydroplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHS) is one of the most challenging that a child can have as it is a lesion where the left side of the heart (mitral valve, ventricle, aorta, and aortic arch) is not developed, requiring a three-stage surgical repair, without which the condition is terminal, although the five year survival of children successfully undergoing the sequence of surgeries is over eighty percent, although chronic medical problems persist; and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2011, Melanie Williams, a registered nurse specializing in labor and delivery and married to Brett Williams and mother of two children, gave birth to her third child, a daughter, Olivia, who had been diagnosed and was born with HLHS; and

WHEREAS, the Williams family is maintaining a website named "Olivia's Special Heart - Our HLHS Journey" at <http://www.oliviasheart.org>; which is chronicling the events and activities involving Olivia and her family in an effort to generate greater awareness to this disease and its impact on families; and

WHEREAS, in light of the emphasis on CHDs, the legislature wishes to highlight to the citizens of Louisiana the fine work of medical professionals who seek to help families dealing with heart defects, as well as the courageous manner in which affected families rise above this medical challenge; and

WHEREAS, the legislature recognizes that all Louisiana citizens should educate themselves on the forms of congenital heart defects; and

WHEREAS, to that end, the legislature desires to identify a champion for these important causes as the 2012 Louisiana Congenital Heart Defect Ambassador; and

WHEREAS, to further underscore the importance of these matters, the legislature wishes to designate a Congenital Heart Defect (CHD) Awareness Day in Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of Louisiana that June 1, 2012, is hereby designated as Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Brett and Melanie Williams Family is hereby named 2012 Louisiana Congenital Heart Defect Ambassadors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana hereby encourages all Louisiana citizens to educate themselves on the forms of congenital heart defects, and to help adults, children, and families living with congenital heart defects to achieve their full potential.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Brett and Melanie Williams, the governor of the state of Louisiana, the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals, the executive director of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, the chancellor of Louisiana State University-New Orleans, the chief executive officer of Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans, the chief executive officer of Leonard J. Chabert Medical Center in Houma, the administrator of University Medical Center in Lafayette, the administrator of Lallie Kemp Regional Medical Center in Independence, the administrator of Bogalusa Medical Center in Bogalusa, the administrator

of W.O. Moss Regional Medical Center in Lake Charles, the chancellor of Louisiana State University-Shreveport, the administrator of E.A. Conway Medical Center in Monroe, the administrator of Huey P. Long Medical Center in Pineville, the chief executive officer of the Tulane Medical Center, the chief executive officer of the Oschner Health System, the Louisiana Chapter of the March of Dimes, and the American Heart Association in Louisiana.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES