

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 00838**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESENTED BY:

*John W. Scibak*

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*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.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Anne M. Gobi*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*5th Worcester*

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 00838

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By Mr. John W Scibak of South Hadley, petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 00838) of Anne M. Gobi relative to designating the third full week in April as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week”. Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE  
□ HOUSE  
□ , NO. 3036 OF 2009-2010.]

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**In the Year Two Thousand Eleven**  
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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
- 2 almost 900,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the United States in 2005, causing
- 3 unspeakable pain and suffering to our most vulnerable citizens;
  
- 4 Whereas, Among the children who are victims of abuse and neglect, nearly four children die in
- 5 the United States each day;
  
- 6 Whereas, Abusive head trauma, including the trauma known as “Shaken Baby Syndrome”, is
- 7 recognized as the leading cause of death of physically abused children;

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

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

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

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

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

22 Whereas, Prevention programs have demonstrated that educating new parents about injury  
23 prevention and the danger of shaking young children can bring about a significant reduction in  
24 the number of cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome;

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

29 Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide  
30 forthwith for the annual observance of Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week,

31 Therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation  
32 of the public convenience.

33 SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition, is hereby  
34 amended by inserting after section 15CCCCC, the following section: -

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