
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 299 Session of
2024

INTRODUCED BY CAPPELLETTI, TARTAGLIONE, STREET, HAYWOOD,
FONTANA, BROWN, COMITTA, MARTIN, SCHWANK, KANE AND HUGHES,
MAY 31, 2024

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, MAY 31, 2024

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of May 2024 as "Celiac Awareness Month" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, May is observed as "Celiac Awareness Month" by the
4 Celiac Disease Foundation, the National Foundation for Celiac
5 Awareness and other celiac disease organizations around the
6 nation and the world; and

7 WHEREAS, According to the Celiac Disease Foundation, celiac
8 disease is a serious autoimmune disease that occurs in
9 genetically predisposed people where the ingestion of gluten
10 leads to damage in the small intestine; and

11 WHEREAS, Celiac disease is estimated to impact 1 in 133
12 people worldwide and approximately 2 million Americans,
13 including more than 129,000 Pennsylvanians; and

14 WHEREAS, Researchers are finding that celiac disease
15 prevalence is doubling approximately every 15 years, making it a
16 growing public health concern; and

17 WHEREAS, It is estimated that up to 83% of Americans who have

1 celiac disease are undiagnosed or misdiagnosed with other
2 conditions with six to ten years marking the average time a
3 person waits to be correctly diagnosed; and

4 WHEREAS, For people with celiac disease, gluten, a protein
5 found in wheat, barley and rye, is poisonous; and

6 WHEREAS, Even a trace amount of gluten, such as a crumb, can
7 trigger an immune response leading the body to attack the small
8 intestine, and this intestinal damage can cause more than 200
9 debilitating symptoms; and

10 WHEREAS, According to the University of Chicago Celiac
11 Disease Center, gluten ingestion for people with celiac disease
12 causes permanent immunological scarring, doubles the risk of
13 heart disease, and acts as a carcinogen, quadrupling the risk of
14 small intestinal cancers; and

15 WHEREAS, Many individuals with celiac disease are never
16 tested and sometimes are never even symptomatic; and

17 WHEREAS, By raising awareness of celiac disease, we can
18 improve early diagnosis, encourage policymakers to increase
19 access to services and fund research and reduce the feelings of
20 isolation and stigma faced by many patients; and

21 WHEREAS, Celiac disease research is severely underfunded in
22 proportion to the scale of the disease, treatment burden and
23 lack of available treatment options; and

24 WHEREAS, According to an analysis published in 2017 by the
25 American Gastroenterological Association titled "Disparities
26 Among Gastrointestinal Disorders in Research Funding from the
27 National Institutes of Health," celiac disease receives the
28 lowest amount of National Institutes of Health funding over a
29 five-year period; and

30 WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health's research funding

1 for celiac disease averaged \$3 million annually or \$1 for every
2 person with the disease; and

3 WHEREAS, Celiac disease research also received the lowest
4 amount of National Institutes of Health grants; and

5 WHEREAS, Currently, a strictly gluten-free lifetime diet is
6 the only way to manage the disease, and this is inadequate given
7 that 80% of foods contain gluten; and

8 WHEREAS, There is a constant risk of cross-contamination in
9 foods, and gluten is not required to be labeled on packaged
10 foods in the United States; and

11 WHEREAS, On August 3, 2021, the Food Labeling Modernization
12 Act of 2021 (FLMA) was introduced in the Congress of the United
13 States, legislation which would make gluten the tenth major food
14 allergen; and

15 WHEREAS, The FLMA requires that gluten be labeled on all
16 packaged foods in the United States, bringing our country into
17 alignment with 62 other countries around the world, including
18 Canada and across Europe; and

19 WHEREAS, The Senate is an institution that can raise
20 awareness for celiac disease with the general public and the
21 medical community; therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize the month of May 2024 as
23 "Celiac Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania.