

2022 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18

Designating the third Saturday in September, in 2022 and in each succeeding year, as Usher Syndrome Awareness Day in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 2022

Agreed to by the Senate, March 1, 2022

WHEREAS, Usher syndrome, a genetic disorder causing hearing and vision loss, is the leading cause of combined deafness and blindness worldwide and currently has no cure; and

WHEREAS, the degree of severity and onset of symptoms of Usher syndrome vary from person to person; hearing loss may be present from birth or, in rarer cases, may develop in childhood or adolescence, and vision loss due to retinitis pigmentosa often develops gradually in adolescence; balance disorders due to inner ear problems may also develop; and

WHEREAS, three categories of Usher syndrome have been identified: Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3, characterized primarily by age of onset and speed of the progression of symptoms; and

WHEREAS, while Usher syndrome is currently incurable, treatments may help with management of hearing loss, vision loss, and balance problems; educational programs, American Sign Language instruction, Braille instruction, and use of adaptive technologies are some of the ways that difficulties associated with Usher syndrome may be alleviated; and

WHEREAS, it is important to increase awareness and to encourage genetic testing and other methods of early detection of Usher syndrome so that those with the disorder can definitively know their diagnosis and seek resources; and

WHEREAS, greater awareness and further research, including gene therapy research, will serve to increase the medical community's understanding of Usher syndrome and improve the lives of persons living with Usher syndrome; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate the third Saturday in September, in 2022 and in each succeeding year, as Usher Syndrome Awareness Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Usher Syndrome Coalition and the Foundation Fighting Blindness so that members of the organizations may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.

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