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1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois General Assembly wish  
3 to recognize the dedication and efforts of the March of Dimes  
4 Illinois Chapter and its volunteers, who have been fighting for  
5 the health and well-being of America's children for over 67  
6 years, and who are now taking on the problem of premature  
7 births; and

8 WHEREAS, The Illinois General Assembly recognizes that  
9 prematurity is the leading cause of death among babies from  
10 birth to one year old in the United States; and

11 WHEREAS, Babies who survive a premature birth often face  
12 the risk of serious life-long health problems, including  
13 learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, blindness, hearing  
14 loss, and other chronic conditions, including asthma; and

15 WHEREAS, Prematurity costs Illinois families and  
16 communities millions of dollars each year in care and  
17 treatment; and

18 WHEREAS, Sadly, the number of premature births has risen  
19 approximately 27 percent over the last 2 decades; today, more  
20 than 530,000 babies are prematurely born in the United States  
21 each year, which costs the nation more than \$26 billion a year;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, There are more than 23,000 premature births in the  
3 State of Illinois, or approximately one in every 8 births;  
4 prematurity is clearly a significant and alarming problem; and

5 WHEREAS, In response to this problem, the March of Dimes is  
6 leading a national campaign to save babies from premature birth  
7 by funding research to find the causes of prematurity and by  
8 aiding local programs that that provide assistance to families  
9 with babies that are born premature; and

10 WHEREAS, As part of the national campaign against premature  
11 birth, the March of Dimes is working to enhance awareness of  
12 smoking cessation as a vital part of maternity care; and

13 WHEREAS, In November of 2008, the March of Dimes will  
14 coordinate activities throughout the country with help from  
15 many local healthcare professionals and government agencies  
16 and departments to call attention to premature birth and to  
17 offer hope to families affected by it; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
19 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
20 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we proclaim the month of  
21 November to be Premature Birth Awareness Month in the State of

1 Illinois and encourage all citizens to be cognizant of the  
2 outstanding life-saving services provided to the people of  
3 Illinois by the March of Dimes Illinois Chapter; and be it  
4 further

5       RESOLVED, That the Illinois General Assembly finds it  
6 important to improve access to health coverage for women of  
7 childbearing age, to support smoking cessation programs as part  
8 of maternity care, and to seek the implementation of policies  
9 to reduce premature births, including calling upon hospitals  
10 and health care professionals to voluntarily assess c-sections  
11 and inductions which occur prior to 39 weeks gestation and  
12 working with the business community to create environments  
13 supportive of maternal and infant health; and be it further

14       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
15 presented to the March of Dimes Illinois Chapter as an  
16 expression of our extreme gratitude.