

2012 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 120

Designating September 26, in 2012 and in each succeeding year, as Mesothelioma Awareness Day in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 20, 2012

Agreed to by the Senate, February 28, 2012

WHEREAS, mesothelioma is a rare form of cancer of the smooth lining of the chest, lungs, heart, and abdomen that is difficult to detect in its early stages and may be associated with many other conditions; however, when vital organs are involved or disease is identified outside of the operative field, surgery is no longer an option and patients are referred to chemotherapy or clinical trials; and

WHEREAS, approximately 2,500 to 3,000 cases of mesothelioma are reported annually in the United States, and because it occurs in such a small number of patients, mesothelioma is often referred to as an orphan disease, but the number of affected persons is steadily rising every year in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia; and

WHEREAS, according to the American Cancer Society, mesothelioma is caused by exposure to asbestos fibers and characterized by a latency period that usually lasts for decades, although the exact method by which asbestos causes the disease is not known; and

WHEREAS, the American Cancer Society indicates that "most people who develop mesothelioma have worked on jobs where they inhaled asbestos particles, or have been exposed to asbestos dust and fibers in other ways, such as by washing the clothes of a family member who worked with asbestos, or by home renovation using asbestos products"; and

WHEREAS, due to the long period between exposure and diagnosis, mesothelioma results in a life expectancy of four to 18 months after onset, and nearly 3,000 thousand persons succumb to the disease each year; and

WHEREAS, to promote public awareness of the dangers of this deadly cancer and of asbestos exposure, the need for treatment protocols, and funding for research, Mesothelioma Awareness Day was started by Meso Foundation volunteers in 2004, and September 26 was designated as the day to (i) remember the victims of mesothelioma, (ii) publicize the dangers of asbestos exposure, (iii) offer hope for those who suffer with the disease today, and (iv) focus on and highlight the need for research support and a cure for mesothelioma; and

WHEREAS, on September 26 each year, citizens across the nation are encouraged to participate in CURE MESOTHELIOMA public awareness programs and events, and to sponsor or organize fundraising campaigns in the name of MESOTHELIOMA AWARENESS; and

WHEREAS, Mesothelioma Awareness Day provides an appropriate venue to communicate an important message to the public about this deadly cancer to ensure affected persons are accurately diagnosed and treated and connected to a support system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate September 26, in 2012 and in each succeeding year, as Mesothelioma Awareness Day in Virginia; and, be it

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

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