

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION
No. 60
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
213th LEGISLATURE
PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2008 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD
District 6 (Camden)
Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT
District 6 (Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Conners, Moriarty and Senator Buono

SYNOPSIS

Designates October of each year as "Blindness Awareness Month" in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee on March 3, 2008, with amendments.

A JOINT RESOLUTION designating October of each year as "Blindness Awareness Month" in New Jersey.

WHEREAS, More than two-thirds of visually impaired adults in the United States are over 65 years of age; and nearly 20.5 million Americans age 40 and older are afflicted with cataracts, which is the leading cause of blindness in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Across the globe, a child goes blind every single minute, and some 37 million people are blind and 124 million severely visually impaired; however, the World Health Organization estimates that 75% of all blindness can be treated, cured, or prevented by highly cost-effective means; and

WHEREAS, The prevalence of blindness increases rapidly in later years, particularly after age 75; and the number of Americans with age-related eye disease is expected to double within the next three decades unless something is done to reverse the

trend, according to EyeCare America, which is the public service foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology; and

WHEREAS, “World Sight Day” in October was launched by Lions Clubs International in 1998 to recognize and reinforce the importance of eradicating preventable blindness; and, since its inception, events have been held on six continents to observe this day, including cataract and glaucoma screenings, collection of used eyeglasses for recycling, and distribution of educational material; and

WHEREAS, “World Sight Day” is supported around the world by governments, health care providers, professional associations, and other concerned individuals who are working together with a shared commitment to eliminate avoidable blindness worldwide by the year 2020; and

WHEREAS, Lighthouse International, a leading resource on vision impairment and rehabilitation worldwide, celebrates, in concert with “World Sight Day” in October, “National Vision Rehabilitation Day,” which features a public awareness campaign designed to educate Americans about the prevalence of vision impairment and the critical importance of vision rehabilitation services, counseling, and training that help people overcome the challenges associated with vision loss; and

WHEREAS, October is recognized as “World Blindness Awareness Month” by the American Academy of Ophthalmology; and

¹WHEREAS, The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in the Department of Human Services, provides services in the area of education, employment, independence, and eye health; and its prevention services program screens more than 45,000 people annually in all 21 counties, including diabetic eye screenings, adult eye screenings, school screenings, and migrant worker screenings; and¹

WHEREAS, The State of New Jersey should support the vitally important work of enhancing public awareness about ways to prevent, treat, and cure blindness and other serious visual impairments that are highlighted by these events during the month of October in each year; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. October of each year is designated as "Blindness Awareness Month" in New Jersey to increase public awareness about eye disease and eye care and ways to address the rising trend of blindness and severe visual impairment.

2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a proclamation recognizing October as "Blindness Awareness Month" in New Jersey and calling upon public officials and citizens of this State to observe the month with appropriate activities and programs.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.