

No. R-400. House concurrent resolution designating April 2014 as Autism Awareness Month.

(H.C.R.290)

Offered by: Representatives Mook of Bennington, Buxton of Tunbridge, Campion of Bennington, Christie of Hartford, Cupoli of Rutland City, Dakin of Chester, Donovan of Burlington, Goodwin of Weston, Juskiewicz of Cambridge, Krebs of South Hero, Lewis of Berlin, Mitchell of Fairfax, Morrissey of Bennington, Peltz of Woodbury, Rachelson of Burlington, Stuart of Brattleboro, Sweaney of Windsor, Till of Jericho, Townsend of South Burlington, and Zagar of Barnard

Whereas, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, “autism spectrum disorder (autism) is a range of complex neurodevelopment disorders, characterized by social impairments, communication difficulties, and restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior,” and

Whereas, each person with autism is a unique individual, and

Whereas, the prevalence of autism is increasing and is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the United States, and

Whereas, autism receives less than five percent of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases, and specifically receives only 0.55 percent of all National Institutes of Health funding, and

Whereas, autism occurs in one in 88 children, and boys are nearly five times more likely to be diagnosed with autism, and

Whereas, siblings of children and adults with autism face unique lifelong challenges and pressures, and need understanding and support, and

Whereas, children and adults with autism care and feel deeply about others but may lack the ability to spontaneously express their feelings in a social context, and

Whereas, caring educators in Vermont are working very hard to support children with autism in order to prepare them for more independent lives, and

Whereas, providing social, educational, environmental, and living supports enable people with autism to lead full and productive lives, and

Whereas, in coming years, opportunities in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math may provide important career paths for some children with autism, and

Whereas, this positive news is tempered with the high unemployment rates of adults with autism, and

Whereas, current students with autism will become adults in the next decade, and will need homes, jobs, friends, and a future, and

Whereas, Vermonters need to recognize the skills and the potential contributions of students with autism by developing the accommodations that will support them as they move from school to work, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 2014 as Autism Awareness Month, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of Education, the Commissioner of Labor, and the Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living.