

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 37

BY SENATOR MORRIS

A RESOLUTION

To designate October 22, 2020, as "Cataract Awareness Day" at the Louisiana State Capitol, with a special emphasis on congenital or childhood cataracts.

WHEREAS, 2020 has been designated as the "Year of the Eye" by the American Academy of Ophthalmology in the hope of better educating the public about cataracts and other conditions and diseases of the eye; and

WHEREAS, cataracts are the world's leading cause of vision loss, and congenital cataracts are rare but destructive if left undiagnosed or untreated; and

WHEREAS, a cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens that blocks or changes the passage of light into the eye and through to the retina causing vision to become blurry or dim; and

WHEREAS, cataracts are most often thought of as related to aging, which is generally the case, but a newborn baby with congenital cataracts is a serious health issue as well; and

WHEREAS, congenital cataracts can cause blindness in children if left undiagnosed and untreated; and

WHEREAS, symptoms of congenital cataracts can include cloudy or blurred vision, eyes that are not aligned, and eye movements that cannot be controlled. The symptoms may affect one (unilateral) or both (bilateral) eyes but can be treated successfully with access to quality eye care services; and

WHEREAS, congenital cataracts can be diagnosed at a newborn baby's first vision screening with a red reflex test, which is not routinely given, but easily accomplished upon request; and

WHEREAS, some congenital cataracts are caused by a genetic "fault" inherited from the child's parents that cause the lens of the eye to develop abnormally; other causes are certain infections experienced by the mother during pregnancy such as chickenpox, certain birth defects such as Down Syndrome, or by an injury to the eye at birth; and

WHEREAS, treatments in babies and children vary and are dependent upon the cataract size and location, involve a weighing of the risks and benefits, and can include any of the following: lens surgery, an initial and continuing monitoring of the eye, contact lenses, glasses, eye patches, and vision therapy; and

WHEREAS, cataracts in older adults are easily corrected with surgery and the implanting of a new lens in the eye and are thought to be one of the most successful surgical procedures, not only because of the satisfactory results, but also because of the low incidence of complications; and

WHEREAS, with cataracts as the number one cause of blindness, the education of the public is essential to diagnose this easily corrected cause, in both aging adults and in newborn babies.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate October 22, 2020, as "Cataract Awareness Day" at the Louisiana State Capitol, with a special emphasis on congenital or childhood cataracts.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE