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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 444 Session of  
2003

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INTRODUCED BY SCHRODER, ARMSTRONG, BARRAR, CORRIGAN, CREIGHTON,  
DeWEESE, DiGIROLAMO, DONATUCCI, FABRIZIO, FICHTER, FORCIER,  
GEIST, HARHAI, HERSHEY, KELLER, LAUGHLIN, LEDERER, MARSICO,  
McGILL, McILHATTAN, PALLONE, PAYNE, PISTELLA, READSHAW,  
RUBLEY, SATHER, SHANER, B. SMITH, SOLOBAY, TIGUE, WALKO AND  
WOJNAROSKI, OCTOBER 7, 2003

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
OCTOBER 7, 2003

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the week of October 5 through 11, 2003, as "Latex  
2 Allergy Awareness Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, In 1997, after receiving over 1,700 reports of latex  
4 allergy reactions, the United States Food and Drug  
5 Administration ordered that any medical device containing latex  
6 carry a cautionary label about potential allergic reactions; and

7 WHEREAS, The National Institute of Occupational Safety and  
8 Health issued an alert in June 1997 requesting assistance in  
9 preventing allergic reactions to natural rubber latex among  
10 workers who use gloves and other products containing natural  
11 rubber latex; and

12 WHEREAS, The Food and Drug Administration issued final rules  
13 that went into effect September 30, 1998, requiring labeling  
14 statements concerning the presence of natural rubber latex in  
15 medical devices, including device packaging containing natural

1 rubber that contacts humans; and

2 WHEREAS, As of March 1999 the total number of latex allergy  
3 reactions associated with latex-containing medical gloves  
4 reported to the Food and Drug Administration was 2,330,  
5 including five deaths; and

6 WHEREAS, Latex gloves have been used as a tool in the health  
7 care industry by health care workers to prevent the transmission  
8 of many infectious diseases; and

9 WHEREAS, Latex is used in emergency equipment, personal  
10 protective equipment, office supplies and hospital and household  
11 supplies; and

12 WHEREAS, Latex is also used in other industries, such as  
13 child care, food service and food processing; and

14 WHEREAS, With its growing use, there is more awareness that  
15 latex and latex-containing products may trigger an allergic  
16 reaction; and

17 WHEREAS, Latex allergy is due to numerous allergenic proteins  
18 derived from natural rubber latex; and

19 WHEREAS, The Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
20 published a technical information bulletin in April 1999,  
21 alerting field personnel to the potential allergic reactions in  
22 some individuals using natural rubber latex products. Such  
23 reactions to latex may include skin rashes, hives, itching,  
24 swollen red skin, swollen lips and tongue, shortness of breath,  
25 dizziness, fainting, eye or sinus symptoms, asthma and, on rare  
26 occasions, shock; and

27 WHEREAS, Recent reports in scientific literature indicate  
28 that from about 1% to 6% of the general population and about 8%  
29 to 12% of regularly exposed health care workers are sensitized  
30 to natural rubber latex; and

1       WHEREAS, The number of health care workers and others  
2 affected will continue to increase because frequent exposure to  
3 latex causes the development of the allergy; and

4       WHEREAS, Children with spina bifida and others who have  
5 conditions involving multiple surgical procedures are at a  
6 greater risk to an allergic reaction to latex due to the need  
7 for multiple surgeries; and

8       WHEREAS, The American College of Allergy, Asthma and  
9 Immunology estimates that 18 million Americans, 64 out of every  
10 1,000, are allergic to latex, including 40% to 65% of children  
11 with spina bifida; and

12       WHEREAS, Various support groups across the country have come  
13 together to increase public awareness of latex allergies and  
14 encourage the endorsement of such efforts across the nation; and

15       WHEREAS, The need to protect the residents, including health  
16 care workers, of Pennsylvania against latex allergies is a  
17 public health issue, and awareness of the public health threat  
18 through education is the key to prevention of latex allergic  
19 reactions; therefore be it

20       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the  
21 week of October 5 through 11, 2003, as "Latex Allergy Awareness  
22 Week" in an effort to urge all Pennsylvanians to become educated  
23 about latex allergies.