

RONALD G. WATERS, MEMBER  
191ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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House of Representatives  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 14, 2011

**TO:** All House Members

**FROM:** Representative Ronald G. Waters, Chairman  
Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus

**SUBJECT:** Request for Co-Sponsorship

In the near future, I will introduce a resolution recognizing the month of October 2011 as “Infant Mortality Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania. According to the National Healthy Start Association, infant mortality refers to the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births during the first year of life. According to the March of Dimes, about 13 million babies a year are born too soon, after less than 37 weeks of the normal 40-week pregnancy.

Since 2000, the infant mortality rate is 6.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, and the rate of deaths has not declined. Poverty, limited access to health care, stress, poor prenatal care, lack of exercise, diet and nutrition are factors that can contribute to negative pregnancy and birth outcomes, which can lead to high infant mortality rates.

Infant mortality disproportionately impacts minority women. For instance, African American women are more than twice as likely to experience an infant mortality birth as white women. Hispanic and Native American women incur higher infant mortality and low birth weight rates than white women.

By designating October 2011 as “Infant Mortality Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania, we are bringing awareness to this salient public health issue. If you would like to co-sponsor this resolution, please contact Danielle Bowers at (717) 772-6955 or via e-mail at [dbowers@pahouse.net](mailto:dbowers@pahouse.net).