

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 139

By Brooks K

A RESOLUTION to commemorate Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is better known as Lou Gehrig's disease; and

WHEREAS, ALS is a fatal neurodegenerative disease characterized by degeneration and death of motor neurons that send impulses from the brain through the spinal cord and to the voluntary muscles of the body; and

WHEREAS, the initial symptom of ALS is weakness of the skeletal muscles, especially those of the extremities; and

WHEREAS, as ALS progresses, the patient experiences difficulty in swallowing, talking, and breathing; and

WHEREAS, ALS eventually causes muscles to atrophy, with the patient becoming a functional quadriplegic; and

WHEREAS, ALS does not affect a patient's mental capacity, so the individual remains alert and aware of his or her loss of motor functions and the inevitable outcome of continued deterioration and death; and

WHEREAS, ALS occurs throughout the world with no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic boundaries; and

WHEREAS, on average, individuals diagnosed with ALS survive only two to five years from the time of diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, ALS has no known cause, means of prevention, or cure; and

WHEREAS, approximately 5,600 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with ALS each year. It is estimated that as many as 450 Tennesseans may have the disease at any given time; and

WHEREAS, according to research, professional football players in the National Football League are four times as likely to develop ALS as the rest of the population; and

WHEREAS, research also indicates that military veterans are approximately twice as likely to develop ALS as those who have not served in the military; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs implemented regulations to establish a presumption of service connection for ALS, thereby presuming that the development of ALS was incurred or aggravated by a veteran's service in the military; and

WHEREAS, a national ALS patient registry, administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is currently identifying cases of ALS in the United States and may become the single largest ALS research project ever created; and

WHEREAS, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge in August of 2014 was a grassroots Internet phenomenon that raised an unprecedented amount of awareness and funding to combat ALS thanks to the participation of celebrities, athletes, politicians, and numerous citizens across the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month increases the public's awareness of ALS patients' circumstances and acknowledges the terrible impact this disease has not only on the patient but on his or her family and the community and recognizes the research being done to eradicate this devastating disease; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby join with the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association to commemorate the month of May 2015 as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.