

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 3246

By Mr. Scibak of South Hadley, petition of John W. Scibak and others for the issuance of an annual proclamation by the Governor establishing the third week in September as Mitochondrial Disease Awareness Week. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

### PETITION OF:

John W. Scibak  
Peter V. Kocot

Christine E. Canavan  
Jennifer M. Callahan

In the Year Two Thousand and Seven.

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE MITOCHONDRIAL DISEASE AWARENESS WEEK.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1     *Whereas*, Mitochondria are the power plants in every cell of a  
2 person's body, and create more than 90% of the energy needed by  
3 the body to sustain life and support growth; and

4     *Whereas*, Mitochondria may not function correctly due to genetic  
5 defects, damage caused by drugs or damage caused by destructive  
6 molecules called free radicals; and

7     *Whereas*, When mitochondria fail, cell injury and cell death  
8 follow, and if the process is repeated throughout the body, whole  
9 systems begin to fail; and

10    *Whereas*, Mitochondrial diseases can cause isolated symptoms  
11 like seizures, low blood counts, blindness, deafness, dementia, heart  
12 failure and progressive muscle weakness, but more often they cause  
13 failure of several organ systems in sequence; and

14    *Whereas*, Although mitochondrial diseases can affect any person  
15 at any age, many children with mitochondrial diseases die before  
16 their teenage years; and

17    *Whereas*, It is estimated that more than one in 4,000 children born  
18 in the United States each year will develop a mitochondrial disease  
19 by 10 years of age; and

20     *Whereas*, Since mitochondrial disorders mimic other diseases, it  
21 is believed that they are underdiagnosed; and

22     *Whereas*, Currently, no cure exists, but early diagnosis can help  
23 patients and their families use proper medication and nutritional sup-  
24 plements to treat the disorder, improve the quality of life, and even  
25 prolong life; and

26     *Whereas*, It is appropriate that all citizens of the Commonwealth  
27 of Massachusetts be better informed about mitochondrial diseases  
28 and their impact; and

29     *Whereas*, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat  
30 its purpose, which is to provide forthwith for the annual observance  
31 of Mitochondrial Disease Awareness Week,

32     *Therefore* it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary  
33 for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

1     SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws, as appearing in the  
2 2002 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section  
3 15ZZZZ inserted by chapter 2 of the acts of 2005, the following  
4 section:—

5     SECTION 15AAAAA. The governor shall annually issue a  
6 proclamation setting apart the third full week in September as “Mito-  
7 chondrial Disease Awareness Week” in recognition of the number of  
8 residents of the Commonwealth affected by mitochondrial diseases,  
9 and the need for increased public awareness, research and support  
10 for victims and their families, and recommending that the week be  
11 observed in an appropriate manner by the people.

1     SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.