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Signed May 10, 1983.

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No. 14

(House Joint Resolution No. 41)

A House Joint Resolution concerning

Infants - Hearing Impairments

FOR the purpose of requesting the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to develop ~~and-implement~~ procedures for a ~~program-fer~~ the identification of present or potential hearing impairment at birth and follow-up of infants who have or may develop a hearing impairment; such procedures are to be in accordance with the guidelines established by the 1982 Statement of the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Academy of Otolaryngology-Head-Neck Surgery, the American Nurses Association, and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

WHEREAS, The Joint Committee on infant hearing recommends that whenever possible, the diagnostic process should be completed and habilitation begun by the age of 6 months; and

WHEREAS, Reduction of the auditory signal during the critical language-learning period can severely limit a child's capability for developing a complete and effective communication system; and

WHEREAS, Delayed identification also delays instruction in speech and language, auditory training and visual modes of communication, timely counseling, education for families, and medical intervention; and

WHEREAS, It is well documented that a delay in learning communication skills will preclude full benefit being derived from expensive educational/rehabilitation programs; and

WHEREAS, Hearing-impaired adults who suffer delayed identification and treatment are underemployed, with the majority engaged in semiskilled or unskilled positions which are highly vulnerable to job cuts and layoffs; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland has already recognized the value of early detection by providing for the detection of such disabilities as--