

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 44

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

214th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 24, 2010

Sponsored by:

Senator LORETTA WEINBERG

District 37 (Bergen)

Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

SYNOPSIS

Designates third full week of September in each year as “Fall Prevention Awareness Week.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 7/20/2010)

SJR44 WEINBERG, MADDEN

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1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating the third full week of September
2 in each year as “Fall Prevention Awareness Week.”

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4 **WHEREAS**, Among people 65 years of age and older, falls are the
5 leading cause of injury-related deaths; every 15 seconds, an injury
6 from a fall is treated in an emergency room, and every 35 minutes,
7 a senior citizen dies following a fall; and

8 **WHEREAS**, It is estimated that across the United States, one third of
9 those age 65 and older, and one half of those over 80 years of age,
10 will experience a fall each year; and

11 **WHEREAS**, It is estimated that some 1.3 million persons in New Jersey
12 are 65 years of age and older; and that the number of people in this
13 age category nationwide will increase from 35 million in 2000 to 55
14 million in 2020; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Falls cause disability and impair senior citizens’ quality of
16 life; and people often develop a fear of falling and restrict their
17 activities, which can lead to a loss of strength and balance and
18 increase their chances of falling; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Falling, and the fear of falling, can lead to feelings of
20 depression and hopelessness, as well as a loss of mobility and
21 functional independence; and

22 **WHEREAS**, The causes of falls vary, with contributing factors
23 including a lack of strength in the lower extremities, the use of four
24 or more medications, reduced vision, chronic health problems, and
25 unsafe home conditions; and

26 **WHEREAS**, More than \$26 billion is spent annually to treat injuries
27 from falls, and this amount is expected to reach \$54.9 billion by
28 2020; the average fall-related hospitalization costs the health care
29 system \$17,500, and the federal Centers for Disease Control and
30 Prevention (CDC) estimates that if the rate of increase in falls is not
31 slowed, annual direct treatment costs for fall-related injuries under
32 the federal Medicare program will \$32.4 billion by 2020; and

33 **WHEREAS**, Falls are not an inevitable consequence of aging, and
34 effective prevention programs can be offered in clinical and
35 community settings that engage senior citizens and their caregivers;
36 and

37 **WHEREAS**, Health care providers can identify patients at risk of
38 falling, review and modify medications, and ensure that older adults
39 receive vision screenings and eyeglasses; while affordable exercise
40 programs can help senior citizens improve their strength and
41 balance, and other approaches can help reduce fall hazards in
42 homes and public places; and

43 **WHEREAS**, CDC has worked with the federal Administration on Aging
44 to identify community-based fall prevention programs that teach
45 senior citizens how to reduce their risk of falling by exercising and
46 changing behavior; CDC also supports the Falls Free Coalition,
47 which is a group of organizations and state coalitions that is
48 working to implement the National Action Plan for falls prevention

1 and to reduce the number of falls and fall-related injuries among
2 older adults; and CDC provides funding to the National Council on
3 Aging to convene state fall prevention coalition workgroups to
4 exchange ideas and best practices; and

5 **WHEREAS**, State fall coalitions in 30 states are working to raise public
6 awareness and promote policies related to reducing falls among
7 older adults, involving various sectors and agencies that deal with
8 diverse issues such as health, housing, and transportation; and

9 **WHEREAS**, The successful implementation of fall prevention strategies
10 can have a positive impact on the quality of life for senior citizens
11 in our State and nationwide by helping them to remain healthy,
12 active, and independent; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Raising public awareness about falls can motivate
14 prevention efforts; and, in 2009, some 22 states issued a formal
15 proclamation recognizing September 22 as “National Fall
16 Prevention Awareness Day,” which highlighted proactive steps that
17 older Americans, their caregivers, and community members can
18 take to reduce falls, while several states extended this effort by
19 creating “Fall Prevention Awareness Week”; and

20 **WHEREAS**, The State of New Jersey should follow up the efforts made
21 by the Department of Health and Senior Services to offer evidence-
22 based fall prevention programs throughout the State in
23 collaboration with providers of services to senior citizens and
24 persons with disabilities, and to expand the effort to enhance public
25 awareness of this important issue and ways in which to prevent falls
26 and fall-related injuries, the need for which was recognized in 2009
27 when the Governor issued a proclamation designating September
28 20 through 26 as “Fall Prevention Awareness Week”; now,
29 therefore,

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31 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
32 *State of New Jersey:*

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34 1. The third full week of September in each year is designated
35 as “Fall Prevention Awareness Week.”

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37 2. The Governor is requested to annually issue a proclamation
38 calling upon public officials, health care professionals, and the
39 citizens of this State to observe the week with appropriate activities
40 and programs designed to raise public awareness of this significant
41 community health issue and effective measures for preventing falls
42 among the senior citizens of this State.

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44 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This joint resolution designates the third full week of September in each year as “Fall Prevention Awareness Week.” The resolution requests the Governor to annually issue a proclamation calling upon public officials, health care professionals, and the citizens of this State to observe this week with appropriate activities and programs designed to raise public awareness of this significant community health issue and effective measures for preventing falls among the senior citizens of this State.