HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 55 FILED ON: 1/4/2013

HOUSE . . . . . No. 2881

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John W. Scibak

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying:

An Act to designate shaken baby syndrome awareness week.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
John W. Scibak	*2nd Hampshire*
Elizabeth A. Poirier	*14th Bristol*

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By Mr. Scibak of South Hadley, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2881) of John W. Scibak and Elizabeth A. Poirier relative to designating the third full week in April as "Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week". State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *838* OF 2011-2012.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

An Act to designate shaken baby syndrome awareness week.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to Whereas, The most recent National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System figures reveal that almost 900,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the United States in 2005, causing unspeakable pain and suffering to our most vulnerable citizens;Whereas, Among the children who are victims of abuse and neglect, nearly four children die in the United States each day; Whereas, Abusive head trauma, including the trauma known as "Shaken Baby Syndrome", is recognized as the leading cause of death of physically abused children;Whereas, Shaken Baby Syndrome can result in the loss of vision, brain damage, paralysis, seizures, or death;Whereas, A recent report in the Journal of the American Medical Association estimated that, in the United States, an average of 300 children will die each year, and 600 to 1,200 more will be injured, of whom two-thirds will be infants under 1 year in age, as a result of Shaken Baby Syndrome, with many cases resulting in severe and permanent disabilities;Whereas, Medical professionals believe that thousands of additional cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome are being misdiagnosed or not detected;Whereas, Shaken Baby Syndrome often results in permanent, irreparable brain damage or death to an infant and many result in more than $1,000,000 in medical costs to care for a single, disabled child in just the few first years of life;Whereas, The most effective solution for ending Shaken Baby Syndrome is to prevent the abuse, and it is clear that the minimal costs of education and prevention programs may preclude enormous medical and disability costs as well as immeasurable amounts of grief for families;Whereas, Prevention programs have demonstrated that educating new parents about injury prevention and the danger of shaking young children can bring about a significant reduction in the number of cases of Shaken Baby

Syndrome;Whereas, Education programs have been shown to raise awareness and provide critically important information about Shaken Baby Syndrome to parents, caregivers, daycare workers, child protection employees, law enforcement personnel, health care professionals, and legal representatives; andWhereas the deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide forthwith for the annual observance of Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week,, therefore, it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 15PPPPP, the following section: -

SECTION 15QQQQQ. The Governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart the third full week in April as “Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week” in recognition of the number children and families in the Commonwealth affected by Shaken Baby Syndrome and the need for increased public awareness, research and support for victims and their families, and recommending that the week be observed in an appropriate manner by the people.