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### **Rodriguez and Assembly Designate Birth Defects Day in Wisconsin**

MADISON - State Rep. Jessie Rodriguez (R-Oak Creek) introduced Assembly Resolution 7, proclaiming March 3, 2017, Birth Defects Day in Wisconsin. The resolution passed the Assembly by unanimous consent.

“Birth defects are costly, common and decrease the likelihood of healthy birth outcomes,” said Rodriguez. “This resolution is a great first step to raising awareness for this issue so that we can reduce the number of birth defects and increase healthy births.”

According to the March of Dimes, birth defects are one of the leading causes of infant death accounting for 23 percent of all infant deaths and costing \$2.6 billion per year in hospital costs.

“Infant death caused by birth defects lead to emotional strife and financial burden,” said Rodriguez. “We need to do what we can to try and reduce birth defects and help families share the joy that comes from having a healthy baby.”

In an effort to reduce birth defects, Rep. Rodriguez is leading an effort to change the birth defects registry in Wisconsin. The birth defects registry is a tool medical researchers use to identify trends and reduce the number of birth defects.

Wisconsin is one of the only states in the country where families have the option to opt-into the birth defects registry making it difficult for researchers to identify trends or commonalities. In many states babies born with birth defects are automatically included in a confidential birth defects registry.

Rodriguez plans to introduce legislation similar to that of other states that will allow families to opt-out of the registry.

By creating a registry that better tracks birth defects the medical researchers may be able to identify causes of birth defects and reduce the overall number.

“As a mother, I feel it is important to help families all across Wisconsin enjoy healthy birth outcomes,” said Rodriguez. “Creating an opt-out birth defects registry will lead to better data and healthier babies.”

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