

## House Resolution 972

By: Representatives Rynders of the 152<sup>nd</sup>, Parrish of the 158<sup>th</sup>, Kidd of the 145<sup>th</sup>, and Dempsey of the 13<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing January 13, 2016, as Easter Seals Georgia and its Champions for Children  
2 Program Day at the state capitol; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, each year thousands of Americans are impacted by birth defects and disabilities,  
4 including many Georgians; and

5 WHEREAS, Easter Seals, a nonprofit entity with locations across Georgia, offers services  
6 to individuals with birth defects and disabilities and their families; and

7 WHEREAS, Easter Seals' efforts enhance those individuals' care and quality of life through  
8 improved physical mobility, employment opportunities, and greater independence for  
9 everyday living; and

10 WHEREAS, Easter Seals, at various locations, offer many different services, including  
11 respite family services, autism services, vocational services, adult day programs, community  
12 living supports, Head Start and Early Head Start, and Champions for Children; and

13 WHEREAS, Champions for Children, an initiative first commenced in 2007 and funded by  
14 an appropriation made by the General Assembly in HB 1026 in 2006, is managed by Easter  
15 Seals; and

16 WHEREAS, Champions for Children requires children to be denied participation in the  
17 TEFRA/Katie Beckett Medicaid Program prior to Easter Seals accepting a child into its  
18 Champions for Children Program; and

19 WHEREAS, an initial appropriation established a \$7.6 million grant fund which was to be  
20 leveraged with private dollars to help children who did not meet the Katie Beckett Waiver  
21 criteria; and

22 WHEREAS, that initial award of grant funds was made by the former Department of Human  
23 Resources, through a competitive process, to the Georgia Easter Seals Coalition with the  
24 funds overseen by The Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta; and

25 WHEREAS, Easter Seals has stretched, with philanthropic support, those funds which were  
26 anticipated to last three years, serving approximately 190 children and their families  
27 annually, to more than eight years of funding the services under Champions for Children; and

28 WHEREAS, an average cost to raise a child is more than \$227,000.00 from birth to age 18,  
29 but these medically needy children are more costly due to requiring additional medical care;  
30 and

31 WHEREAS, since its inception, Champions for Children has provided direct financial  
32 assistance and support services to Georgia families with medically fragile and special needs  
33 children for up to \$2,000.00 annually (such as children with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down  
34 Syndrome and others), serving more than 350 Georgia families yearly; and

35 WHEREAS, Easter Seals' fiscal stewardship and tireless efforts to stretch this funding by  
36 finding private partners have proven that these children will get assistance; and

37 WHEREAS, Champions for Children has assisted families with children like Carter,  
38 Matthew, Emma, Slade, and many others, who perhaps were born prematurely or who have  
39 experienced medical costs not covered by their parents' health insurance or other children  
40 who have special needs through no fault of their own, by providing respite care, hearing aids,  
41 special medical foods, dental care, optical care, recreation and therapeutic activities, and a  
42 host of other items so that they may live at home with their families; and

43 WHEREAS, the Champions for Children program can conceivably be known as "angels" for  
44 children program as it provides tools to many Georgia children so that they can live  
45 successful lives.

46 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
47 the members of this body extend a warm greeting to Easter Seals, its staff and volunteers and  
48 its Champions for Children, and the individuals and families that are served and convey to  
49 them this legislative body's heartiest commendation for their past, present, and future work  
50 for those individuals in this state, throughout our nation, and around the world and we

51 encourage all citizens to support Easter Seals' chapters and Champions for Children and their  
52 efforts helping those individuals with special needs and disabilities.

53 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that January 13, 2016, is recognized as Easter Seals Georgia  
54 and its Champions for Children Program Day at the state capitol.

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
56 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Easter  
57 Seals and its Champions for Children initiative.