_____ JOINT RESOLUTION NO. _____

INTRODUCED BY _____

(Primary Sponsor)

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF MAY AS AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS) AWARENESS MONTH AND URGING THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR RESEARCH IN ORDER TO FIND A TREATMENT AND A CURE FOR AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS.

WHEREAS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS is better known as Lou Gehrig's disease; and

WHEREAS, ALS is a fatal neurodegenerative disease characterized by degeneration of cell bodies of the lower motor neurons in the gray matter of the anterior horns of the spinal cord; and

WHEREAS, the initial symptom of ALS is weakness of the skeletal muscles, especially those of the extremities; and

WHEREAS, as ALS progresses the patient experiences difficulty in swallowing, talking, and breathing; and

WHEREAS, ALS eventually causes muscles to atrophy, and the patient becomes a functional quadriplegic; and

WHEREAS, ALS does not affect a patient's mental capacity, and the patient remains alert and aware of the loss of motor functions and the inevitable outcome of continued deterioration and death; and

WHEREAS, on average, patients diagnosed with ALS only survive 2 to 5 years from the time of diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, ALS has no known cause, means of prevention, or cure; and

WHEREAS, research indicates that military veterans are approximately twice as likely to develop ALS as those who have not served in the military; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs implemented regulations to establish a presumption of service connection for ALS, thereby presuming that the development of ALS was incurred or aggravated by a veteran's service in the military; and

WHEREAS, a national ALS patient registry, administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is currently identifying cases of ALS in the United States and may become the single largest ALS research project ever created; and

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month increases the public's awareness of ALS patients' circumstances and acknowledges the terrible impact this disease has not only on the patient but on his or her family and the community and recognizes the research being done to eradicate this horrible disease.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislature hereby proclaims the month of May each year as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month in Montana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature urges the President and Congress of the United States to enact legislation to provide additional funding for research in order to find a treatment and eventually a cure for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send a copy of this resolution to the governor of Montana, the Montana congressional delegation, the majority and minority leaders of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and the President of the United States.

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