Senate Resolution No. 819

BY: Senator STEWART-COUSINS

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 20-26, 2025, as Abusive Head Trauma/Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week in the State of New York

WHEREAS, The most recent statistics compiled by the federal government estimate that 546,149 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the United States in 2023, of whom 39.3 percent were under three years of age; and

WHEREAS, That statistic includes 46,431 children in New York State, of whom 9,468 (20.3 percent) were under three years of age; and

WHEREAS, On an average day in the United States, at least five children will die as a consequence of abuse or neglect by a parent or other person entrusted with their care; and

WHEREAS, Children younger than one year of age accounted for 44 percent of all child abuse and neglect fatalities in 2023, and children four years of age or younger accounted for more than three-quarters (77.8 percent) of all child abuse and neglect fatalities in 2023; and

WHEREAS, The leading cause of death of abused children under age five is Abusive Head Trauma, including the inflicted trauma commonly known as Shaken Baby Syndrome; and

WHEREAS, On average 1,200 to 1,400 children in the United States are diagnosed with AHT/SBS every year, and medical experts believe many additional cases are likely misdiagnosed or undetected; and

WHEREAS, Inflicted head trauma occurs when a caregiver loses control and shakes a baby or young child, most frequently less than one year of age but in some cases as old as five years of age, resulting in loss of vision, brain damage, paralysis, seizures, or death; and

WHEREAS, Shaken Baby Syndrome often causes permanent, irreparable brain damage or death to an infant, and may result in more than $1,000,000 in medical and rehabilitation costs for the care of a single disabled child during the first years of life; and

WHEREAS, A growing body of medical evidence indicates that even mild trauma to the brain caused by AHT/SBS is likely to cause learning disabilities in children and substantially increase the risk of substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated in 2011 that the average cost of child maltreatment is $210,012 over the course of a victim's lifetime, including the costs of child welfare, special education, criminal justice expenses, medical care and lost productivity as an adult; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that the taxpayers of the State of New York may, though the State Medicaid program, pay as much as 41% of the medical and rehabilitation costs of inflicted head injuries; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control estimates child abuse costs our nation more than $124 billion a year, and the cost of child abuse in New York State is estimated to exceed $13 billion a year; and

WHEREAS, The most effective way to end AHT/SBS is by educating parents and caregivers about the danger of shaking children and providing the skills needed to cope with frustration and anger, and the minimal costs of educational and preventative programs may avert enormous medical and disability costs and untold grief for many families; and

WHEREAS, Evidence-based education and awareness programs, such as the nationally recognized New York SBS Prevention Project, developed by Dr. Mark Dias with the support of the NYS Children and Families Trust Fund, and implemented in collaboration with Kaleida Health Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo and the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital of Westchester, are shown to raise awareness and provide critically important information about SBS to parents, caregivers, daycare workers, and health care professionals; and

WHEREAS, The NYS Office of Children and Family Services supports the work of hospital-based education programs through the efforts of the Safe Babies New York program, bringing this and other important safety information to the families of 205,000 babies born last year in New York State; and

WHEREAS, Home visiting programs, such as Healthy Families New York, the Nurse Family Partnership, and other programs for new parents show great promise for preventing maltreatment; and

WHEREAS, These prevention efforts are supported by national groups such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Center for Shaken Baby Syndrome, as well as individuals and organizations in New York State, such as Prevent Child Abuse New York, the Cynthia Gibbs Foundation, and the SKIPPER Initiative, who work to educate new parents and caregivers, increase awareness among the general public and professionals, and encourage increased support for victims and their families in the health care and criminal justice systems; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Legislature has enacted legislation to help increase awareness of AHT/SBS by requiring that: hospitals offer written information about Shaken Baby Syndrome (2001); new child care providers be educated about the causes, consequences, and prevention of SBS before they are licensed to care for children (2003); hospitals to offer new parents the opportunity to watch a video about the causes, consequences and prevention of SBS so that they can help protect their child from shaking injuries (2004); the Health Department coordinate a statewide campaign to educate the public about the causes, consequences and prevention of SBS (2006); the Education Department provide a

curriculum on SBS to schools so that students, who not only may be parents someday, but who may be babysitting for young children now, are educated about the importance of coping skills (2006); and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body wishes to commend those advocates, organizations and agencies of State, county and local governments which continue work continuously and tirelessly to educate parents and caregivers about the causes, consequences and prevention of SBS and other inflicted injuries; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body particularly wishes to recognize the nurse educators who provide education to new parents at New York's maternity hospitals so that every new parent has the opportunity to learn how they can help protect their child from shaking injuries; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 20-26, 2025, as Abusive Head Trauma Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.