**SAMPLE PROCOLAMATION/RESOLUTION**

Designating the Month of March as “Autoimmune Awareness Month” and supporting efforts to increase awareness of autoimmune diseases and increase funding for autoimmune disease research.

Whereas researchers have identified the category of autoimmune diseases includes more than 100 diseases that are chronic and in many cases debilitating—with no known cures.

Whereas autoimmune diseases can affect any part of the body, including the blood, blood vessels, muscles, nervous system, gastrointestinal tract, endocrine glands, and multiple-organ systems, and can be life-threatening;

Whereas researchers have identified a close genetic relationship and a common pathway of disease that exists among autoimmune diseases, explaining the clustering of autoimmune diseases in individuals and families;

Whereas the family of autoimmune diseases is under-recognized, and poses a major health care challenge to the United States;

Whereas the National Institutes of Health (NIH) estimates that autoimmune diseases afflict up to 50,000,000 people in the United States, 80 percent of the people affected are women, and the prevalence of autoimmune diseases is rising;

Whereas autoimmune diseases are among the top 10 leading causes of death in women under 65;

Whereas autoimmune diseases frequently affect children and young adults, leading to a lifetime of disability;

Whereas diagnostic tests for most autoimmune diseases are not standardized, making autoimmune diseases very difficult to diagnose;

Whereas, because autoimmune diseases are difficult to diagnose, treatment is often delayed, sometimes resulting in irreparable damage and unnecessary suffering. Early diagnosis and treatment are critical;

Whereas the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies reported that the United States is behind other countries in research into immune system self-recognition, the cause of autoimmune diseases;

Whereas a study by the Autoimmune Association revealed that it takes the average patient with an autoimmune disease more than 4.5 years, to get a correct diagnosis;

Whereas there is a significant need for more collaboration and cross-fertilization of basic autoimmune research;

Whereas there is a significant need for research focusing on the etiology of all autoimmune-related diseases, to increase understanding of the root causes of these diseases rather treating the symptoms after the disease has had its destructive effect;

Whereas the National Coalition of Autoimmune Patient Groups is a coalition of national organizations focused on autoimmune diseases working to consolidate the voices of patients with autoimmune diseases and to promote increased education, awareness, and research into all aspects of autoimmune diseases through a collaborative approach; and

Whereas designating March as “Autoimmune Awareness Month” would help educate the public about autoimmune diseases and the need for research funding, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatments: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved,*That the [XX]—

(1) designates March as “Autoimmune Awareness Month”;

(2) supports the efforts of health care providers and autoimmune patient advocacy and education organizations to increase awareness of the causes of, and treatments for, autoimmune diseases; and

(3) supports the goal of increasing funding for aggressive research to learn the root causes of autoimmune diseases, as well as the best diagnostic methods and treatments for people with autoimmune diseases.