

(S. B. 1278)

(No. 82)

(Approved May 5, 2006)

### **AN ACT**

To declare the month of March of each year as “Endometriosis Awareness Month” in Puerto Rico.

### **STATEMENT OF MOTIVES**

Endometriosis is a chronic and painful illness that affects 5.5 million women in the United States and millions more worldwide. In Puerto Rico, it is estimated that between 4 and 5%, namely one in every 20 women, have endometriosis. Endometriosis occurs when the tissue lining the inside of the uterus (called endometrium) is outside, usually on the organs located in the abdomen, such as the ovaries, the Fallopian tubes, the lining of the pelvic cavity, the intestines and the bladder.

This misplaced tissue develops into lesions or implants that respond to the menstrual cycle in the same manner as the endometrium. Each month, the tissue develops, decomposes and detaches in response to the levels of female hormones such as estrogen and progesterone. These lesions cause internal hemorrhages, inflammation, severe and chronic pain and infertility. Endometriosis is a progressive condition that may result in significant damage to the reproductive organs. Therefore, women’s awareness must be raised with respect to the importance of dealing with these symptoms early in order to avoid greater damage.

The symptoms of endometriosis are the following:

- Pain before and during periods (dysmenorrhea)
- Pain during sexual intercourse (dyspareunia)

- Infertility
- Chronic pelvic pain
- Tiredness
- Painful urination during periods
- Painful bowel movements during periods
- Other gastrointestinal discomforts such as diarrhea, constipation and nausea.

Endometriosis has been associated with an increase in the risk of suffering allergies, asthma and self-immune illnesses.

In researches conducted by the Endometriosis Association (EA) it has discovered that there is an initial link between dioxin (TCDD) exposure and the development of endometriosis. Dioxin is a toxic chemical byproduct of pesticide manufacturing, bleached pulp and paper products, and of medical and municipal waste incineration. The EA discovered a colony of Rhesus monkeys that had developed endometriosis after exposure to dioxin. Of the monkeys exposed to dioxin, 79% developed endometriosis. Hence, the higher the dioxin exposure, the more severe the endometriosis.

There is a nonprofit foundation in Puerto Rico devoted to orientating women about this condition and the adequate manner of dealing with it. The purpose of this bill is to emphasize the work of this organization and contribute significantly toward increasing attention to this problem that affects Puerto Rican women. This shall be accomplished by raising awareness of what endometriosis is, as well as its causes and treatment. This purpose shall be achieved through the approval of this bill.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:**

Section 1.- This Act shall be known as the “Act to Declare the month of March of each Year as Endometriosis Month in Puerto Rico.”

Section 2.- The month of March of each year is hereby declared as “Endometriosis Month in Puerto Rico.” The Governor of Puerto Rico, through a proclamation and at least ten (10) days before March 1 of each year, shall remind the Puerto Rican people of the importance of the suitable activities to be held as a result of the proclamation.

Section 3.- During said week, the Secretary of the Department of Health, together with the different agencies and instrumentalities of government and health entities, shall develop a campaign directed toward endometriosis prevention.

Section 4.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 82 (S.B. 1278) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature of Puerto Rico:

**AN ACT** to declare the month of March of each year as “Endometriosis Awareness Month” in Puerto Rico,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 28<sup>th</sup> of August of 2006.

Francisco J. Domenech  
Director