

P.L. 2020, Joint Resolution No. 4, *approved September 30, 2020*
Senate Joint Resolution No. 38 (*First Reprint*)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating September of each year as
2 “Sickle Cell Awareness Month” in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Sickle cell disease is a group of disorders that cause red
5 blood cells to become hard and pointed, rather than soft and round,
6 which can lead to pain, organ damage, low blood count, and
7 anemia; and
8 **WHEREAS**, Sickle cell disease is the most common genetic disorder in
9 the United States, affecting between 90,000 and 100,000
10 Americans; and
11 **WHEREAS**, Sickle cell disease primarily affects people of African
12 descent, but is also present in populations of Mediterranean, Middle
13 Eastern, and Asian descent; and
14 **WHEREAS**, Sickle cell anemia is the most common, and often the most
15 severe, form of sickle cell disease; and
16 **WHEREAS**, The genetic trait for sickle cell disease runs in families,
17 meaning that parents can pass the trait or the disease on to their
18 children; and
19 **WHEREAS**, Sickle cell trait is not a disease, and people who have the
20 trait may not be aware of it, but if a mother and father both carry
21 sickle cell trait, each of their children will have a one in four chance
22 of inheriting sickle cell disease; and
23 **WHEREAS**, All infants born in New Jersey are screened for sickle cell
24 ¹**【anemia】 disease**¹, and in 2015, 40 babies were confirmed to have
25 the classic form of the disease, and an additional 36 babies were
26 confirmed to have a variant of the disease or carrier status; and
27 **WHEREAS**, The closest treatment to a cure that is currently available
28 for sickle cell disease is a bone marrow transplant, an intense and
29 risky medical procedure that is only used in the most severe cases
30 of sickle cell disease; and
31 **WHEREAS**, Bone marrow transplantation requires a healthy donor who
32 is a genetically matched to the recipient, which can often be
33 difficult to locate, sometimes delaying the possibility of a cure for
34 some individuals with sickle cell disease; and
35 **WHEREAS**, Individuals with sickle cell disease often depend on costly
36 medications and blood transfusions to manage their symptoms; and
37 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey has enacted legislation in 2011 to require
38 health insurance to cover treatment for sickle cell anemia and

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly floor amendments adopted August 27, 2020.

1 require the Department of Health to publish information for the
2 public to learn about sickle cell anemia, which is now available on
3 the department's website and at health care facilities and social
4 services agencies throughout the State; and

5 **WHEREAS**, The United States federal government first officially
6 recognized September as Sickle Cell Awareness Month in 1983,
7 and continues to raise public awareness of the disease in September
8 of each year; and

9 ¹**WHEREAS**, There are community-based organizations in this State,
10 such as the Sickle Cell Association of New Jersey, that can make a
11 greater impact in raising awareness about sickle cell disease if there
12 is a designated "Sickle Cell Awareness Month" in New Jersey; and¹

13 **WHEREAS**, There is continued need to raise public awareness in New
14 Jersey about the genetic risk factors associated with, and the
15 symptoms and treatment of, sickle cell disease; now, therefore,

16

17 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
18 *State of New Jersey:*

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20 1. The month of September of each year is designated as
21 “Sickle Cell Awareness Month” in New Jersey to raise public
22 awareness of the genetic risk factors associated with, and the
23 symptoms and treatment of, sickle cell disease.

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25 2. The Governor is requested to issue a proclamation annually
26 calling upon public officials and the citizens of this State to observe
27 “Sickle Cell Awareness Month” with appropriate activities and
28 programs.

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30 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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35 Designates September of each year as “Sickle Cell Awareness
36 Month” in New Jersey.