

HOUSE BILL 1948

By Todd

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15,
relative to the observance of Transverse Myelitis
Awareness Day.

WHEREAS, Transverse Myelitis is a destructive neurological disorder; an estimated 1,400 new cases are diagnosed in the United States each year; and

WHEREAS, Transverse Myelitis affects 2 to 5 people per million, but is not widely recognized by the general public as being a significant and serious neurological spinal cord disorder; and

WHEREAS, Transverse Myelitis is a devastating condition that negatively affects the neurological system by targeting the insulating material covering nerve cell fibers (myelin), thus causing the spinal cord to become inflamed; and

WHEREAS, several factors may cause Transverse Myelitis, including certain infections, vaccinations, immune system disorders, or an episode of other myelin disorders such as multiple sclerosis; 60% of Transverse Myelitis cases diagnosed are idiopathic (no known cause); and

WHEREAS, symptoms include severe neurological pain, muscle weakness, abnormal sensations, and numbness of the lower extremities, as well as possible progression to paralysis, sensory loss, and bowel and bladder dysfunction; and

WHEREAS, Transverse Myelitis is often overlooked, is difficult to diagnose, and has no real cure; and

WHEREAS, recovery from Transverse Myelitis can be difficult, requiring months of treatment; only one-third of Transverse Myelitis patients, utilizing drugs and therapy, are able to make an almost full recovery; however, two-thirds of such patients deal with severe symptoms

that may permanently affect their ability to perform the ordinary tasks of daily living, or even complete paraplegia or quadriplegia; and

WHEREAS, the Transverse Myelitis Network is a support, information, and resource website that was begun in October of 2008, and now has more than 1400 members from nearly every state in the United States and many countries throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, if Transverse Myelitis were more widely recognized, improved diagnosis and further scientific research would benefit those who live with this debilitating condition; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15, Chapter 2, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

15-2-124.

June 6 of each year shall be observed as "Transverse Myelitis Awareness Day," to be proclaimed as such by the governor, to raise public awareness about this debilitating neurological spinal cord disorder. This week shall not be a legal holiday as defined in § 15-1-101.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.