

House Concurrent Resolution No. 27

96TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES WALTON GRAY (Sponsor), STILL, ELLINGER, MAY, CARTER, JONES (63), SCHUPP, NEUMAN, McCANN BEATTY, PIERSON, CURLS, BROWN (50), WEBB, AND SMITH (71), (Co-sponsors).

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2 **WHEREAS**, two million African-Americans, or 1 in 12, have the sickle cell trait and
3 more than 80,000 people in the United States, 98% of whom are African-American, are affected
4 by sickle cell disease; and

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5 **WHEREAS**, some, but not all, people who have sickle cell anemia need blood
6 transfusions to prevent life-threatening problems such as stroke, spleen problems, or acute chest
7 syndrome or to treat a sudden worsening of anemia due to an infection or enlarged spleen; and

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9 **WHEREAS**, blood transfusions are sometimes the best way to treat and prevent some
10 of the complications of sickle cell anemia and blood transfusions are commonly used to treat
11 worsening anemia and sickle cell complications; and

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13 **WHEREAS**, the human leukocyte antigen (HLA) system in humans distinguishes from
14 an immunological standpoint, foreign pathogens and tissues from the human body, and therefore
15 in this capacity, plays a major role in the immunologic regulations of bone marrow
16 transplantation. A key factor to the success of allogeneic bone marrow transplant is the ability
17 to closely match the patient and donor for a group of proteins found on the surface of most of the
18 cells of the human body; and

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20 **WHEREAS**, African-American patients who need a bone marrow transplant have an
21 especially hard time finding an unrelated bone marrow donor because African-Americans make
22 up only 12% of the United States population and, thus, fewer potential donors are available,
23 variations in HLA-types among people with African ancestry than in any other ethnicity are
24 numerous, and some individuals with both African and European or other ancestry may have
25 novel combinations of HLA-types that are not found in either parental population; and

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27 **WHEREAS**, it is critical to match blood types for African-Americans with other
28 African-Americans because there are differences in the frequency of certain HLA-types among
29 ethnic groups, and therefore patients are more likely to find a good match among donors from
30 their own ethnic group; and

31 **WHEREAS**, the American Red Cross is working to partner with the African-American
32 and Hispanic-American community in our region to close the gap on minority blood donations
33 and the need for education about the safety of the blood supply and of the blood donation process
34 is pivotal to the survival of the community. The American Red Cross is participating in health
35 fairs, conducting educational sessions, and seeking to dispel long-standing cultural myths. The
36 organization is working to hire and retain a more diverse workforce that can represent the
37 communities we work in and ultimately assist us in overcoming many of the language and
38 cultural barriers of these individuals' participation in blood donation:

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40 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the House of
41 Representatives of the Ninety-sixth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate
42 concurring therein, hereby designates December 17, 2011, as "American Red Cross Minority
43 Blood Drive Day" in Missouri in honor of Dr. Charles Richard Drew, an African-American
44 physician and research pioneer in the field of blood transfusions; and

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46 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly encourages and urges all
47 citizens of the State of Missouri to participate in appropriate activities on "American Red Cross
48 Minority Blood Drive Day" to honor the medical revolution Dr. Drew made within the medical
49 profession by storing blood plasma, establishing the American Red Cross blood bank, and
50 organizing the world's first blood bank drive.

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