

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 657

Designating September 13, 2008, as “National Celiac Disease Awareness Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2008

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for himself and Mr. INHOFE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

SEPTEMBER 22 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 17), 2008

Committee discharged; considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating September 13, 2008, as “National Celiac Disease Awareness Day”.

Whereas celiac disease affects approximately 1 in every 130 people in the United States, for a total of 3,000,000 people;

Whereas the majority of people with celiac disease have yet to be diagnosed;

Whereas celiac disease is a chronic inflammatory disorder that is classified as both an autoimmune condition and a genetic condition;

Whereas celiac disease causes damage to the lining of the small intestine, which results in overall malnutrition;

Whereas, when a person with celiac disease consumes foods that contain certain protein fractions, that person suffers a cell-mediated immune response that damages the villi of the small intestine, interfering with the absorption of nutrients in food and the effectiveness of medications;

Whereas those problematic protein fractions are found in wheat, barley, rye, and oats, which are used to produce many foods, medications, and vitamins;

Whereas, because celiac disease is a genetic disease, there is an increased incidence of celiac disease in families with a known history of celiac disease;

Whereas celiac disease is underdiagnosed because the symptoms can be attributed to other conditions and are easily overlooked by doctors and patients;

Whereas, as recently as 2000, the average person with celiac disease waited 11 years for a correct diagnosis;

Whereas $\frac{1}{2}$ of all people with celiac disease do not show symptoms of the disease;

Whereas celiac disease is diagnosed by tests that measure the blood for abnormally high levels of the antibodies of immunoglobulin A, anti-tissue transglutaminase, and IgA anti-endomysium antibodies;

Whereas celiac disease can be treated only by implementing a diet free of wheat, barley, rye, and oats, often called a “gluten-free diet”;

Whereas a delay in the diagnosis of celiac disease can result in damage to the small intestine, which leads to an increased risk of malnutrition, anemia, lymphoma, adenocarcinoma, osteoporosis, miscarriage, congenital malformation, short stature, and disorders of the skin and other organs;

Whereas celiac disease is linked to many autoimmune disorders, including thyroid disease, systemic lupus erythematosus, type 1 diabetes, liver disease, collagen vascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and Sjogren’s syndrome;

Whereas the connection between celiac disease and diet was first established by Dr. Samuel Gee, who wrote, “if the patient can be cured at all, it must be by means of diet”;

Whereas Dr. Samuel Gee was born on September 13, 1839; and

Whereas, by designating September 13, 2008, as National Celiac Disease Awareness Day, the Senate can raise awareness of celiac disease in the general public and the medical community: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates September 13, 2008, as “National Celiac Disease Awareness Day”;

3 (2) recognizes that all people in the United States should become more informed and aware of celiac disease;

4 (3) calls upon the people of the United States to observe the date with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and

5 (4) respectfully requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Celiac Sprue Association, the American Celiac Society, the Celiac Disease Foundation, the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America, and the Oklahoma

- 1 Celiac Support Group No. 5 of the Celiac Sprue As-
- 2 sociation.

