

Senators Schauer and Hammerstrom offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 88.

A resolution of tribute to the Michigan Children's Trust Fund for its dedication to Michigan's children.

OUR CHILDREN, OUR LIVES

"Children in our nation are like the canaries miners used to test the air before they went underground. How they fare is a good indication of how we rate as a society, overall."

-- Meredith Wiley

Author, *Ghosts from the Nursery*

Whereas, For over 23 years, the Michigan Children's Trust Fund has been a leader both state and nationally in the field of child abuse prevention. It is most appropriate for the members of this legislative body to extend its highest praise and commendation to them for their work over the years, leadership, and vision. They continue to keep us focused on the fact that our children are our lives and our most precious resource; and

Whereas, As the only statewide organization dedicated solely to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the Michigan Senate is proud not only of the work of this great organization, but its role in giving birth to this prevention concept through Dr. Ray Helfer, a renown pediatrician from Michigan State University who is considered the "father of children's trust funds," which are in every state of the Union and our territories. The Michigan Children's Trust Fund has continued that proud legacy and been a place to incubate new ideas, contribute to the development and body of knowledge in the field of prevention, raise awareness and money, educate, effect policy, conduct research, but mostly, to fund and develop a community-based network of child abuse and neglect prevention programs and services; and

Whereas, Every five minutes, a child in Michigan is a victim of child abuse or neglect, and though over 350 cases are reported daily, many more are not. Child abuse and neglect cuts across all socio-economic, geographic, ethnic, and gender lines and reflects the current dramatic changes in the American family. Families are more transient and isolated from their extended families. There is an increasing number of single-parent families, and issues of substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, family stress, and ignorance about child rearing practices further exacerbate this problem; and

Whereas, Research has shown us that those most at risk and vulnerable are the youngest children in our society, age 6 and under--who represent more than two-thirds of all reported victims. There is also a direct correlation between the abuse and neglect perpetrated on our youngest citizens and crime and violence in later years. Further, most child abuse and neglect can be prevented, and for every \$1 spent on prevention, \$34 can be saved on the consequences of abuse, not to mention the human costs which are incalculable. Our children are our lives. How they fare is a barometer of our society, and when we grow old, we will not depend solely upon our own children, but other people's children too; and

Whereas, The Michigan Children's Trust Fund recognizes that child abuse prevention is a community responsibility and not that of any one entity. The fight against child abuse has and must be fought at multiple levels, in collaboration with many partners, including children and families, nationally, state, and locally, and with both individuals and the community/society. That is why we, the Legislature, felt it befitting to restore the state income tax check-off to the Children's Trust Fund. It was the major source of funding this great concept was predicated on, preserving the trust and also allowing Michigan citizens to help protect our most valuable natural resource--our kids; and

Whereas, Since its creation, the Michigan Children's Trust Fund generated more than \$80 million that has served over 7.5 million children and families and earned a place of distinction in the field of child abuse prevention; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we hereby express official gratitude and commendation to the Michigan Children's Trust Fund in recognition of their service to children and families, state and nationally; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Children's Trust Fund as evidence of our highest esteem.