

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**PROCLAMATION**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: Each year, over 1 million pregnancies in the United States end in miscarriage, stillbirth, the death of a newborn baby, or sudden infant death syndrome, and one in every three pregnancies worldwide ends in loss; and

WHEREAS: The loss of a child's life is a great tragedy and traumatic event that brings a family pain, suffering, and grief; and

WHEREAS: These losses are often linked to congenital malformations and chromosomal abnormalities, complications of prematurity, maternal complications of pregnancy, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, which is the leading causes of infant death; and

WHEREAS: While over the last 50 years there has been a decline in infant mortality rates due to improved access to health care, advances in neonatal medicine, and public health education campaigns, far too many of this country's children still do not survive through birth and infancy; and

WHEREAS: The infant and neonatal mortality rates in Arkansas are higher than the U.S. national average; and

WHEREAS: Further medical research and public health initiatives should be supported to resolve unanswered questions surrounding pregnancy loss and infant loss, with the hope that insight gained will lead to prevention of some of these tragic losses; and

WHEREAS: Health care and other professionals who come into contact with individuals who have suffered a miscarriage, stillbirth, or the death of a child, such as physicians, nurses, clergy, emergency medical technicians, funeral directors, police officers, and employers, can better serve these individuals and their families if they have special training and a better understanding of the impact pregnancy and infant loss can have on those who experience such traumatic events; and

WHEREAS: Public awareness and education is critical to the prevention of pregnancy and infant loss and to learning how to respond with compassion toward families affected by the loss of a child; and

WHEREAS: In 1988, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed October as "National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month;" and

WHEREAS: Governors around the nation will sign proclamations designating Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day; and

WHEREAS: Every year people around the world participate in the International Wave of Light that invites participants to light a candle for pregnancy loss and infant loss remembrance starting at 7 p.m. Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> in their respective time zones, and to leave the candle burning for at least one hour to create a continuous chain of light spanning the globe for a 24-hour period in honor and remembrance of the children who die during pregnancy or shortly after birth; and

WHEREAS: Arkansans will come together for the Fourth Annual International Wave of Light Ceremony on the Arkansas State Capitol steps at 6:30 p.m. to remember pregnancy loss and infant death; and

WHEREAS: Arkansas and its residents make it their goal this October and each month thereafter to support people who have been affected by pregnancy loss and infant loss, raise more awareness of its prevalence, and attract more research into this area;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim October 2017 as

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS MONTH

across the State, and I urge my fellow citizens to join together and allow the residents of Arkansas to recognize those bereaved mothers, fathers, and other family members; support them through their grief; and work to prevent the causes of these deaths in the future.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of October, in the year of our Lord 2017.



Asa Hutchinson, Governor



Attest:



Mark Martin, Secretary Of State