

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

**PROCLAMATION**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: Premature birth is the leading cause of death in newborn babies. Prematurity is defined as birth before 37 completed weeks of gestation. Premature babies who survive may suffer immediate complications and often face lifelong health problems, such as learning disabilities, vision and hearing impairment, and cerebral palsy; and

WHEREAS: There were 38,800 live births in Arkansas in 2016, and of those 4,202 babies were born preterm, representing 10.8 percent of all state births, that is 1 in 9 babies born too soon; and

WHEREAS: Prematurity and birth defects are the leading causes of infant mortality in Arkansas with 1,178 babies born with a birth defect, and 297 babies died before reaching their first birthday in 2016; and

WHEREAS: In Pulaski County, there were 5,522 live births, with 654 or 11.8 percent of those born preterm; and

WHEREAS: In Arkansas, preventing a premature birth could mean an annual savings of up to \$217 million; and

WHEREAS: The month of November is recognized as World Prematurity Awareness Month to bring about recognition of this global health crisis, and November 17<sup>th</sup> is recognized as Prematurity Awareness Day across the United States;

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 November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 as

**PREMATURITY AWARENESS DAY**

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October, in the year of our Lord 2017.



  
Asa Hutchinson, Governor

Attest:

  
Mark Martin, Secretary Of State