



**S.B. 280**

127th General Assembly  
(As Introduced)

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D. Miller**

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**BILL SUMMARY**

- Designates the month of November as "Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Awareness Month."

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**CONTENT AND OPERATION**

***Background--reflex sympathetic dystrophy***

Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD), also known as complex regional pain syndrome, is a chronic pain condition that affects an estimated three to six million Americans.<sup>1</sup> The exact cause has yet to be determined, although some believe RSD occurs when nerves misfire and disrupt brain processes relaying information regarding temperature, sensations, and blood flow. RSD can arise after any type of injury, minor to severe, or appear without signs of obvious physical trauma. RSD is usually more severe than one would expect for the injury inflicted, and the pain typically worsens over time.<sup>2</sup> The pain is often concentrated in the area of the injury, but can spread throughout the body and become crippling in extreme cases.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> American Society for Surgery of the Hand. Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD) (last visited Feb. 6, 2008), available at [http://www.assh.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PatientsPublic/HandConditions/ReflexSympatheticDystrophyRSD/Reflex\\_Sympathetic\\_.htm](http://www.assh.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PatientsPublic/HandConditions/ReflexSympatheticDystrophyRSD/Reflex_Sympathetic_.htm).

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. "NINDS Complex Regional Pain Syndrome Information Page" (last visited Feb. 6, 2008), available at [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/reflex\\_sympathetic\\_dystrophy/reflex\\_sympathetic\\_dystrophy.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/reflex_sympathetic_dystrophy/reflex_sympathetic_dystrophy.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Penn State Medical Center College of Medicine. "Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy" (last visited Feb. 6, 2008), available at <http://www.hmc.psu.edu/healthinfo/r/rsd.htm>.

There is no cure for RSD, but treatments such as topical drugs, anti-depressants, physical therapy, and pain medication may alleviate painful symptoms. The prognosis for RSD varies greatly as one may suffer chronic pain while another may go into remission. RSD is difficult to diagnose because there is no simple test for confirmation, although those diagnosed and treated early have a better chance of controlling or alleviating the symptoms.<sup>4</sup> Because the pain is often chronic and excruciating, it is both psychological and physical, and can cause severe depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

**The bill**

The bill designates the month of November as "Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Awareness Month."

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**HISTORY**

| ACTION     | DATE     |
|------------|----------|
| Introduced | 01-29-08 |

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<sup>4</sup> American Society for Surgery of the Hand. Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD) (last visited Feb. 6, 2008), available at [http://www.assh.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PatientsPublic/HandConditions/ReflexSympatheticDystrophyRSD/Reflex\\_Sympathetic\\_.htm](http://www.assh.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PatientsPublic/HandConditions/ReflexSympatheticDystrophyRSD/Reflex_Sympathetic_.htm).