

2021-J1290

Senate Resolution No. 1290

BY: Senator ORTT

COMMENDING former Senator James L. Seward for more than three decades of distinguished service to the people of New York State

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those individuals of outstanding purpose whose lives have been committed to public service and the pursuit of excellence in the conduct of the legislative process in this noble Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing tradition, this Legislative Body is justly proud to reflect upon those extraordinary individuals who have made everlasting contributions on behalf of their fellow men and women and have left their mark on this great Empire State; Senator James L. Seward is one such individual; he truly devoted his life to serving his government with integrity and commitment for the sole purpose of serving the needs of others; and

WHEREAS, A native of Otsego County, Senator James L. Seward attended Oneonta public schools and graduated from Hartwick College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science; he also studied at the Nelson Rockefeller Institute of SUNY Albany, and in 1999, he received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from his alma mater; and

WHEREAS, In 1986, Senator James L. Seward was elected to the New York State Senate representing the 50th District and was appointed Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee; in his final term, he represented the 51st District, which consists of Schoharie, Otsego, and Cortland Counties, as well as parts of Tompkins, Herkimer, Chenango, Cayuga, Delaware, and Ulster Counties; and

WHEREAS, In December of 2020, Senator James L. Seward officially retired after more than three decades of service; and

WHEREAS, As a trailblazing legislator and State leader, Senator James L. Seward was well-known for his effective leadership and steadfast commitment to his constituents; during his notable career, he worked tirelessly to create jobs and provide health care for all; and

WHEREAS, During his distinguished tenure in this Legislative Body, Senator James L. Seward sponsored numerous bills that were enacted into law and have made deep and lasting changes to better the lives of the residents of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Senator James L. Seward was responsible for the Power for Jobs program which helped retain and create thousands of jobs in New York, and partnered with local economic development groups and governments to boost business; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, Senator James L. Seward assumed chairmanship of the Senate Standing Committee on Insurance; in this capacity, he fought to reform and broaden health insurance coverage, creating wider availability of health insurance for the uninsured; and

WHEREAS, Senator James L. Seward also worked with local schools to open School Based Health Centers providing vital services for students in rural districts who would otherwise struggle to access medical care; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, Senator James L. Seward won passage of legislation which extends group health insurance offered by chambers of commerce to sole proprietors of businesses, and in 2008, secured legislative approval of a bill to provide short term health insurance policies to young adults and college students; and

WHEREAS, Senator James L. Seward was recognized statewide for his Freedom Plan to match simpler, lower cost health insurance policies with federally authorized health savings accounts; this legislation is

considered an innovative approach to addressing the rising cost of health insurance for employers and their employees; and

WHEREAS, Senator James L. Seward sponsored the Health Insurance Premium Integrity Act to boost the percentage of premium dollars spent directly on health care, and was responsible for broadening health insurance coverage for voluntary firefighters and EMTs by letting them purchase policies through their municipalities; and

WHEREAS, This dedicated public servant also served as Chairman of the Senate Task Force on Volunteer Emergency Services where he was instrumental in establishing a low interest loan program for the capital needs and equipment purchases of voluntary fire departments and emergency squads; he won funding increases for the program and for the state fire academy in order to improve training for firefighters; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Senator James L. Seward co-sponsored the original STAR Program, which has saved individual homeowners thousands of dollars and was a strong advocate for farmers; he successfully fought for state funding for numerous agricultural programs, including the ROPs Rebate Program which has helped farmers retrofit tractors with lifesaving Rollover Protection Devices; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout have been his wife, Cynthia and their two grown children, Ryan and Lauren, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his achievements; and

WHEREAS, Every citizen in New York State has most certainly benefited, in one way or another, from the deep dedication, intelligence and commitment that Senator James L. Seward brought to his work as a legislator, loyal friend, and trusted advisor; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to reflect upon those outstanding individuals who have made everlasting contributions on behalf of their fellow man and have truly left their mark on this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to

commend former Senator James L. Seward for more than three decades of distinguished service to the people of New York State; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to former Senator James L. Seward.