

## 2009-J1133

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION celebrating the life and accomplishments of abolitionist, women's rights activist and humanitarian, Sojourner Truth, 1797-1883

WHEREAS, March is Women's History Month, a time to honor, reflect on and pay tribute to the women of our Nation for their significant contributions and dedication to fighting for equality for all women; and

WHEREAS, The efforts and accomplishments of African-American women are all too often overlooked and the need to recognize their commitment is worthwhile, meaningful and long overdue; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to celebrate the life and accomplishments of abolitionist, women's rights activist and humanitarian, Sojourner Truth, 1797-1883; and

WHEREAS, Born Isabella Baumfree in 1797, on the Johannes Hardenbergh estate in the Swartekill neighborhood in what was then the Town of Hurley, New York, but is now in Esopus, Sojourner Truth is considered to be one of the two most famous Black Women of the 19th Century; and

WHEREAS, Sojourner Truth was a 19th Century Ulster County former slave and forerunner of the women's and civil rights movement; she, like many other slaves, had watched her brothers and sisters be sold into slavery and taken away from their families; and

WHEREAS, Sojourner Truth grew up speaking Dutch and had at least five children (two daughters were sold away from her); she fled her owners' household in 1827, found refuge in the home of the Van Wageners, and took their name; and

WHEREAS, In 1843, she was inspired to change her name from Isabella Van Wagener to 'Sojourner Truth' and to set out to become a preacher; she ended up in Northampton, Massachusetts, with a utopian community and

stayed there until 1850, when she settled in Battle Creek, Michigan; by that time she had given lectures on abolition and women's rights in many public appearances; and

WHEREAS, "Ain't I a Woman?" is a persuasive, motivational, inspirational, and the most recognized speech by Sojourner Truth; she delivered it at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851; and

WHEREAS, The celebrated Sojourner Truth had excellent powers of oration which are highlighted forever in her famous speech; this remarkable lady's unwavering dedication to the women's suffrage movement stands as a beacon of inspiration for all women, both then and now, who have struggled and continue to struggle for their rights; and

WHEREAS, Sojourner Truth was received by President Abraham Lincoln at the White House in 1864; after the war, she advocated a 'Negro State' and promoted the emigration of African-Americans to the West; she continued to travel throughout much of the Northeast, lecturing on a variety of inspirational and social reform topics, before retiring to Battle Creek, Michigan, in her later years; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that Women's History Month is a highly felicitous time to recognize and honor women of greatness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the life and accomplishments of abolitionist, women's rights activist and humanitarian, Sojourner Truth, 1797-1883.