

## 2009-J4685

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor David A. Paterson to proclaim April 17, 2010 as Jacob A. Riis Day in the State of New York, world renowned Danish-American journalist and social documentary photographer

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor David A. Paterson to proclaim April 17, 2010 as Jacob A. Riis Day in the State of New York, world renowned Danish-American social reformer, journalist and social documentary photographer; and

WHEREAS, Jacob August Riis, a Danish-American citizen, was America's first photojournalist, social reformer and author; his photography, used to help him document the plight of the city's immigrant poor, made him an important figure in the history of documentary photography; and  
WHEREAS, His most popular novel, HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES, became a pivotal work that precipitated much-needed reforms and made him famous; President Theodore Roosevelt, his lifelong friend, held Jacob A. Riis in very high esteem, calling him "the most useful citizen of New York" and "the best American I ever knew"; and

WHEREAS, When Jacob A. Riis died on May 26, 1914, in Barre, Massachusetts, at the age of 65, a movement was underway before his funeral to name a New York City Park in his honor; this famous landmark is now the Jacob Riis Park in New York; and

WHEREAS, During the 1940s, a six-foot-high solid granite pedestal was erected at Bay 9 with the inscription "Jacob A. Riis -- Distinguished Citizen of Danish Birth. Pioneer in Improving City Parks and Playgrounds."; it was surmounted by a bronze head of Jacob Riis and remained there for over two decades; on June 13, 1964, the bust was violently torn down and stolen; the pedestal has remained empty for 46 years; and

WHEREAS, The compassionate life and numerous accomplishments of Jacob A. Riis can be seen in the legacies he left including the many literary works such as: CHILDREN OF THE POOR, OUT OF MULBERRY STREET, THE BATTLE WITH THE SLUM, and CHILDREN OF THE TENEMENT; bringing the European tradition of Christmas Caroling to America; the dedication of a stained glass window in honor of his late wife, Elisabeth, to the Church of the

Resurrection of Richmond Hill, Queens, New York; and the raising of a flagpole in front of the Richmond Hill Library where he spoke the words "Fellow Citizens! You have heard the children's pledge, and you have seen the flag raised by veteran hands, which, if they tremble today, was steady as fate itself when they bore it forward, until peace was won for the land and freedom for all men forever."; and

WHEREAS, Today, 31 students of the Aquinas Honor Society of the Immaculate Conception School of Jamaica Estates, New York, have successfully raised the necessary funds to replace the long-lost missing bronze bust of Jacob A. Riis; the unveiling ceremony will be held on April 17, 2010, in New York; over 20 students and their teachers from Ribe, Denmark will be coming to New York to participate in this auspicious event; and

WHEREAS, The 31 outstanding students from the Aquinas Honor Society of the Immaculate Conception School include: Tashanie Narain, Derek Netto, Jean-Philippe Rancy, Corey Strickland, Nicholas Strickland, Jada Quinlan, Carluto Toussaint, Dominique Leone, Katherine Virgino, Ysabelle Bismonte, Puni Samaroo, Tahina Felisca, Gabriella Ulloa, Julio Ulloa, Brandon Arjun, Nicole Anigbogu, Tarah-Anne Rancy, Cliff Mayard, Jewel Sabordo, Michelle Gan, Michael Gan, Amne Madi, Amarachi Abakporo, Cristina Agudelo, Karla Freire, Krystal Madrinan, Jessica Netto, Arianna Goberdhan, Roseanne Hernandez, Saranya Radhakrishnan, and Zeena Samad; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recall and honor individuals such as Jacob A. Riis, recognizing his valued contributions to society and publicly acknowledging his endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor David A. Paterson to proclaim April 17, 2010 as Jacob A. Riis Day in the State of New York, world renowned Danish-American journalist and social documentary photographer; and be it further RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable David A. Paterson, Governor of the State of New York, and the 31 aforementioned students.