

## 2009-K1273

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 40th Anniversary of Long Island Housing Services

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those organizations and individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of Long Island Housing Services, to be celebrated on Friday, April 30, 2010, at the Touro Law Center in Central Islip; and

WHEREAS, In addition, this event is to honor Beth M. Wickey, Esq. of Nassau-Suffolk Law Services, Inc., and retiring Long Island Housing Services' President; along with Harriet Spiegelman, Long Island Housing Services' Projects Facilitator; and

WHEREAS, Long Island Housing Services' (LIHS) mission is the elimination of unlawful housing discrimination and the promotion of decent and affordable housing through advocacy and education; and

WHEREAS, Within a week after the tragic assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Fair Housing Act, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was passed; that following year, what has developed into Long Island's premier and unique Fair Housing organization was formed through the then Smithaven Ministries; the idea came together from volunteers representing civic and religious group leaders concerned about racially discriminatory practices and segregation on Long Island; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1970s, the group incorporated and became an independent, nonprofit, fair housing agency that came to be well known as Suffolk Housing Services; the group successfully challenged real estate agencies, management companies, landlords, and owners where investigation revealed solid evidence for discrimination; and

WHEREAS, In the mid-1980s, the agency became nationally acclaimed for its investigation and testing abilities with an Eastern District landmark jury award of a significant amount in favor of two black air traf-

fic controllers; the organization conducted tests which proved that black prospective tenants were falsely denied rental housing at the Watergate Apartments in Patchogue, New York; and WHEREAS, In 1991, the agency expanded its services to investigate discrimination in Nassau County and became Long Island Housing Services; LIHS' work in challenging all kinds of discrimination has received national attention, especially among topics such as race, handicap, and familial status; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, LIHS' successful testing program was highlighted on CBS' "48 Hours" news magazine show; the story featured undercover black and white testers being given false information about availability of housing by the broker; and

WHEREAS, LIHS' primary objectives are to promote racial integration and equal housing opportunity throughout Long Island; reduce and eliminate unlawful housing discrimination; encourage the development of low-income and affordable housing; and to educate and assist the public regarding housing rights and opportunities in its region; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, LIHS has provided thorough fair housing advocacy and enforcement services; it is a true asset to society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of Long Island Housing Services; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Beth M. Wickey, Esq. of Nassau-Suffolk Law Services, Inc., and retiring Long Island Housing Services' President; and Harriet Spiegelman, Long Island Housing Services' Projects Facilitator.