

2011-J147

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating Thomas Paine Day, January 29, 2011, in honor of his indelible contributions to liberty, democracy and civic engagement

WHEREAS, From time to time, this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals of remarkable courage and strength of character who risked their own lives for others, and stood with fortitude for freedom and humanity; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to join the Bedford Barrow Commerce Block Association and the Thomas Paine Friends, Inc. in commemorating Thomas Paine Day, January 29, 2011, in honor of his indelible contributions to liberty, democracy and civic engagement; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Paine, who was born on January 29, 1737 and who died on June 8, 1809, was the greatest political writer of his time; his best-selling works, Common Sense, The Rights of Man, and The Age of Reason fundamentally altered the political and social landscape of the 18th century world; and

WHEREAS, In his classic and influential essay, Common Sense, Thomas Paine raised the call for independence from Britain, for a democratic form of government based on equal rights for all and set the blueprint for the establishment of our Constitution, Bill of Rights and laws; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Paine supported the American Revolution through his inspirational The American Crisis papers, his personal service in the army and in government office, and by the unparalleled contribution of his personal funds; and

WHEREAS, Today, he is recognized as a visionary political thinker whose ideas on the inalienable rights of the individual, and on govern-

ments founded to protect those rights, provide the ideological foundations of modern democracies around the world; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Paine rose from humble origins to become the foremost political figure of his time; friend and foe to the world's most powerful leaders, he never sought personal power or wealth; instead, he devoted himself to championing the rights of the "Common Man"; his emphatic belief in the dignity and rights of men everywhere challenged the traditional authority and dogmas of kings and churches and would change the course of modern history; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Paine's radical ideas of liberty, equality, and justice for all have transcended time and nations; his literary genius for revolutionary prose crystallized popular aspirations by articulating their cause in the vernacular of the masses; and

WHEREAS, Although opposed by an entrenched power structure and consequently marginalized in our history, Thomas Paine's vision of a new world, where justice and humanity reign, still inspires generations of men and women everywhere to demand their inalienable rights; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to join the Bedford Barrow Commerce Block Association and the Thomas Paine Friends, Inc. in commemorating Thomas Paine Day, January 29, 2011, in honor of his indelible contributions to liberty, democracy and civic engagement; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause further to urge the citizens of this great Empire State to take note of this day named in honor of this visionary thinker who was central to the establishment of our Nation, the man who was English by birth, French by proclamation, and American by choice, Thomas Paine; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Kathryn Donaldson, President, Bedford Barrow Commerce Block Association; and the Friends of Thomas Paine, Inc.