

2011-K355

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Geraldine Anne Ferraro, former Queens congresswoman and first woman nominated as a United States Vice Presidential candidate

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to individuals of distinguished purpose and true commitment who dedicated their lives and careers to public service and the pursuit of excellence in the conduct of the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow and deepest regret that this Legislative Body, representing the people of the State of New York, records the passing of Geraldine Anne Ferraro, noting the significance of her purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine A. Ferraro, the former Queens congresswoman who made history in 1984 as the first Italian-American and the first woman nominated for national office by a major party when she accepted the Democratic nomination for vice president, died Saturday, March 26, 2011, in Boston, Massachusetts, at the age of 75; and

WHEREAS, Born on August 26, 1935, in the Hudson River city of Newburgh, New York, where she was the fourth child and only daughter of Dominick Ferraro, an Italian immigrant who owned a restaurant and a five-and-dime store, and the former Antonetta L. Corrieri; and

WHEREAS, After the death of her father when she was just 8 years old, Geraldine A. Ferraro's mother sold the family store and their home, and moved to the South Bronx, and later to Queens; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine A. Ferraro attended the Marymount School, a Catholic boarding school in Tarrytown, New York; her outstanding grades earned her a scholarship to Marymount College in Tarrytown; and

WHEREAS, An English major, Geraldine A. Ferraro transferred to Marymount College Manhattan where she was an athlete as well as editor of the

school newspaper; she won numerous honors before graduating in 1956; and
WHEREAS, After graduating, Geraldine A. Ferraro taught in a public
grade school in Queens; she later applied to Fordham Law School and was
admitted to its night school where she was one of two women to graduate
in a class of 179 students; this exceptional scholar received her law
degree in 1960; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine A. Ferraro married John Zaccaro on July 16, 1960,
two days after she passed her bar exam, but kept her maiden name profes-
sionally to honor her mother; for the first 13 years of her marriage,
Geraldine devoted herself mainly to her growing family, but also did
legal work for her husband's business, worked pro bono for women in
Family Court, and participated in local politics; and

WHEREAS, In 1970, she was elected to the esteemed position of Presi-
dent of the Queens County Women's Bar Association; four years later, she
began working with her cousin, District Attorney Nicholas Ferraro, as an
assistant district attorney in Queens, New York; and

WHEREAS, The following year, she transferred to the Special Victims
Bureau and quickly earned a reputation for her tenacity and talent in
the courtroom; Geraldine A. Ferraro later credited her work in the
Special Victims Bureau investigating rape, crimes against the elderly,
child abuse and domestic violence with changing her political views from
moderate to liberal; and

WHEREAS, In 1978, Geraldine A. Ferraro won a three-way Democratic
primary to replace Congressman James J. Delaney of Queens, before
winning the general election campaign; and

WHEREAS, As a Congresswoman, Geraldine A. Ferraro successfully advo-
cated for improved mass transit around LaGuardia Airport, and increased
economic opportunities for women; those efforts quickly propelled her to

prominence within the Democratic party, leading to her appointment as
Chairwoman of the 1984 Democratic Platform Committee; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine A. Ferraro was the 1984 Vice Presidential nominee

alongside Presidential candidate Walter F. Mondale; although unsuccessful, her candidacy blazed a trail for generations of female politicians of all backgrounds at all levels of government; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, Geraldine A. Ferraro returned to politics, narrowly losing a Democratic primary for Senate to Robert Abrams; she ran again in 1998, but lost to Charles E. Schumer; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine A. Ferraro served as ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission during the Clinton administration and co-host of the CNN program "Crossfire" from 1996 to 1998; she was also the author of numerous books and articles; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine A. Ferraro is survived by her loving husband of 50 years, John A. Zaccaro; and her three children and their spouses, Donna Zaccaro Ullman and Paul Ullman, John and Anne Rasmussen Zaccaro, and Laura Zaccaro Lee and Josh Lee; as well as eight grandchildren, Matthew and Natalie Ullman, Elizabeth, Samantha and John Zaccaro, and Daisy, Alexander and Jane Lee; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her career, Geraldine A. Ferraro contributed significantly to the quality of life of her constituents and the communities of the State of New York as well as those throughout the Nation; she will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Geraldine Anne Ferraro, to salute her many accomplishments in bettering her community, State and Nation, and to express its deepest condolences to her family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Geraldine Anne Ferraro.