

## 2011-K1187

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the death of former Vice President and Governor of the State of New York, George Clinton

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the death of George Clinton, and to honor his life on Friday, April 20, 2012; and

WHEREAS, George Clinton was born on July 26, 1739, in Little Britain, New York, to Charles Clinton, an Irish immigrant and a member of the New York colonial Assembly; and

WHEREAS, With his father as his political inspiration, George enlisted in his father's regiment to fight in the French and Indian War at the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, Following the war he began to study law, his true passion in life, practicing in his hometown and opening several offices in Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, In 1768, George Clinton served in the New York State provincial assembly where he fervently championed the colonial cause until 1775, when he was chosen as a member of the second Continental Congress; and

WHEREAS, In 1770, he married Cornelia Tappen, a resident of Kingston, New York, described as a pretty Dutch girl; and

WHEREAS, It was while serving as a member of Congress that George Clinton first met George Washington, a representative from Virginia; and

WHEREAS, George Clinton and George Washington forged a lifelong friendship in both war and peace; and

WHEREAS, On December 19, 1775, he was commissioned a Brigadier General of the combined Orange and Ulster Militia; and

WHEREAS, The following year, both Westchester and Dutchess Counties

were added to his command and he was ordered to protect the Hudson Highlands; and

WHEREAS, He successfully fortified the Highlands and was commissioned a Brigadier General in the Continental Army; and

WHEREAS, On April 20, 1777, the New York Convention, meeting in Kingston, adopted the New York State Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Under this new constitution, George Clinton was elected the first Governor of New York State on July 9, 1777; and

WHEREAS, The fortunes of war often caused the evacuation and removal of forces and legislative bodies from harm's way; and

WHEREAS, The Continental Congress was forced to be removed from the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, British forces in October of 1777 did cause the burning of the state capital at Kingston; and

WHEREAS, Sir Henry Clinton, the British Commander did storm the defenses of the Hudson Highlands; and

WHEREAS, British casualties numbered 350 in their assault; and

WHEREAS, General George Clinton barely escaped capture by the British in his heroic defense of the Highlands; and

WHEREAS, His defense of the Highland forts contributed to the disruption of the British campaign to divide the colonies in two; and

WHEREAS, General Washington continued to rely on the support and friendship of George Clinton throughout the conduct of the war; and

WHEREAS, Clinton continued throughout the war to serve both as Governor and as General; and

WHEREAS, Both Washington and Clinton desired to strengthen the role of Congress in its relation to the Continental Army; and

WHEREAS, Governor Clinton also sought to strengthen the standing and economy of New York State; and

WHEREAS, He referred to New York in a letter to Congress: "We are the Seat of War and Witness of its Distresses"; and

WHEREAS, Governor Clinton and General Washington toured upstate New York in July-August of 1783; and

WHEREAS, Both Washington and Clinton formed a real estate partnership; and

WHEREAS, On November 25, 1783, Governor Clinton and Commander in Chief George Washington rode side by side in triumph into a liberated New York City; and

WHEREAS, His concern for the New York economy caused him to oppose the national tariff proposal of 1783; and

WHEREAS, He grew increasingly alarmed that the national government might overwhelm the prerogatives of state government; and

WHEREAS, He became a prominent opponent of the new Federal Constitution because of these concerns; and

WHEREAS, He was a delegate and presiding officer at the New York ratification convention in Poughkeepsie; and

WHEREAS, He favored a conditional ratification dependant on a series of amendments; and

WHEREAS, He encouraged his party members to vote their preference; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution was ratified in Poughkeepsie in 1788; and

WHEREAS, The anti-federalists party looked to nominate George Clinton as Vice President under George Washington; and

WHEREAS, Popular enthusiasm for the new government and Clinton's well known opposition to the Constitution defeated their efforts; and

WHEREAS, In 1790, Washington, Jefferson and Clinton traveled together from New York City to Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, This is the occasion of the famous Letter to the Hebrew Congregation of George Washington; and

WHEREAS, Washington declared that the new government "gives to bigotry no sanction"; and

WHEREAS, In 1791, Clinton and Burr joined Jefferson and Madison on a tour of upstate New York, including Lake George; and

WHEREAS, This trip is considered by many the foundation of the Democ-

atic-Republican Party; and

WHEREAS, The alliance between New York and Virginia was a crucial element in the success of anti-Federalist candidates; and

WHEREAS, As a part of the 1788 Constitutional Convention for New York, property requirements were suspended for the franchise; and

WHEREAS, Polling places were established in every precinct in every county for the first time; and

WHEREAS, The vote was by secret ballot; and

WHEREAS, Peter Van Gaasbek was the leader of the Ulster County Clintonian Party; and

WHEREAS, On March 28, 1788, George Clinton and his brother, James, were elected on a slate of representatives to the Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS, A vigorous debate of the merits of the proposed constitution was engaged; and

WHEREAS, A Bill of Rights was proposed by Governor Clinton and his allies as a condition to ratification; and

WHEREAS, On July 26, 1788, by a vote of 30 to 27, New York delegates ratified the Constitution "in full confidence that certain amendments be adopted"; and

WHEREAS, The Clinton Circular Letter calling for the adoption of amendments to the Constitution was instrumental in proposing the Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, George Clinton became nationally known for his role in the Constitutional debate and was regarded for national office; and

WHEREAS, George Clinton did receive some support in the national elections; and

WHEREAS, He was narrowly elected for a fifth term as Governor in 1789; he increasingly looked to form national alliances; and

WHEREAS, Clinton's nephew DeWitt Clinton was appointed to serve as his secretary; and

WHEREAS, An alliance with Livingston and Burr increased his political influence in New York at the expense of the Federalist faction; and

WHEREAS, The election for Governor in 1791 was particularly spirited and controversial and the term was a difficult one; and

WHEREAS, Clinton's daughter Cornelia married the French Minister to the United States, Edmund Charles Genet; and

WHEREAS, George Clinton declined to seek reelection in 1796, retiring to his farm in Greenwich; and

WHEREAS, On March 15, 1800, his wife, Cornelia Clinton, died; and

WHEREAS, He was nominated and elected to the New York State Assembly; and

WHEREAS, In 1801, he was again nominated to serve an additional term as Governor of New York State; and

WHEREAS, President Thomas Jefferson wrote to Governor Clinton in 1801: "there is no one whose opinion would command with me greater respect than yours, if you would be so good as to advise me"; and

WHEREAS, The Jefferson - Clinton alliance continued to provide for the leadership in the Republican movement during Jefferson's first term in office, despite the work of Aaron Burr; and

WHEREAS, In 1804, Vice President Aaron Burr shot Alexander Hamilton in a duel; and

WHEREAS, In the national elections of 1805, President Thomas Jefferson and Vice President George Clinton were elected by 162 to 14 electoral votes; and

WHEREAS, Clinton was considered for the Presidency once again at the end of Jefferson's term; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson and Madison worked to preserve the office of President for the state of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, George Clinton, although advanced in age commanded the respect of his party and was elected to serve as Vice President for an additional term; and

WHEREAS, In 1811, Vice President Clinton cast the deciding vote in the

Senate not to re-charter the Bank of the United States; and

WHEREAS, After suffering infirmities of advanced age and service to his country, George Clinton died of pneumonia in Washington, DC, on Monday, April 20, 1812, at 9:00 am; and

WHEREAS, His death was commemorated by popular outpouring of grief in both Washington and New York City as he was laid to rest in the Congressional Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and right that we should observe and commemorate his death at the end of his long and faithful service to his country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the death of former Vice President and Governor of the State of New York, George Clinton; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of George Clinton.