

## 2011-K1350

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Clifton Perez upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Eighth Annual Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. Advocacy Award on May 21, 2012

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those individuals within the great Empire State who have made strong contributions to the disability community; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Clifton Perez upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Eighth Annual Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. Advocacy Award, to be presented at the 2012 Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day sponsored by the New York State Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities and the New York State Assembly Committee on Mental Health on Monday, May 21, 2012; and

WHEREAS, The Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. Advocacy Award was created in 2005 to honor the late Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. for his lifelong commitment to advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. would have turned one hundred years old on May 10, 2012; and

WHEREAS, The tremendous efforts Clifton Perez has made to improve and enhance the lives of New Yorkers with disabilities are worthy of this recognition; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez is a Systems Advocate at the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, an independent living center located in Troy, New York, which seeks to help persons with disabilities do for themselves instead of depending on others; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley is rooted in the philosophy of self-reliance and self-determination because the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community is cost-effective and reduces the spending of local, state and federal revenues; and

WHEREAS, An individual born with a vision impairment, Clifton Perez brings more than 26 years of working in the field of advocacy to enhance

and defend the rights of people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, As a legally blind person, Clifton Perez attended institutional settings for his primary education, first in Puerto Rico and then in the Bronx; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable man holds a master's degree in social work from the University of Stony Brook, New York; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez has worked on such priority issues as the Help America Vote Act, transportation, employment and housing; and

WHEREAS, He was involved with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), where he even attended the White House ADA signing ceremony on July 26, 1990; and

WHEREAS, Dedicated to helping others, Clifton Perez has established himself as an expert on many issues affecting people with disabilities, particularly as they pertain to improving transportation systems for the disability community; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez continues to press for policy and legislative reform at the grassroots, state and national levels; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Clifton Perez is a federally approved trainer on the Americans with Disabilities Act and serves on the New York Association on Independent Living's subcommittee on the ADA; and

WHEREAS, As a New York State Approved Dispute Mediator, Clifton Perez uses his training to act as a mediator, assisting individuals and commu-

nities to craft solutions that bring out the best in them and resolve their conflicts for the long run; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his role as Systems Advocate, Clifton Perez currently serves as the Region II Representative for the National Council on Independent Living, Chair for the National Council on Independent Living Public Policy Sub-Committee on Transportation, Member of the Paratransit Work Group of the Capital District, Delegate at-Large for the American Council of the Blind of Albany, Member of Democracy for the Hudson-Mohawk Region, Chair of the New York Association on Independent Living Public Policy Sub-Committee on Transportation, and Member of the Transportation Sub-Committee of the New York State Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez has received numerous awards and accolades including the 2008 National Council on Independent Living Regional Advocacy Award; the 2004 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Stony Brook

School of Social Welfare; the President's Distinguished Alumni Recognition Award from Hudson Valley Community College in 2000; and the 1996 National Council on Independent Living Regional Advocacy Award; and WHEREAS, Happily married to his wife, Mickey, for over 30 years, Clifton Perez involves all of his family members in his disability rights work, recognizing the need to include them in his passion and to help even the youngest members know the importance of advocacy and independence; and

WHEREAS, Because he himself lives with a disability and has dealt with disability issues his entire life, Clifton Perez believes societal misunderstanding coupled with the lack of acceptance perpetuates the struggle of people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, As a devoted advocate, Clifton Perez has committed his life to battling hate and injustice in society; and

WHEREAS, The initiatives Clifton Perez strives to implement as a passionate advocate for persons with disabilities mirror the priorities that this Legislative Body has before us today, the New York State Assembly Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day 2012; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved to honor Clifton Perez, a leader and an advocate, recognizing his labors and the promise of his future endeavors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Clifton Perez upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Eighth Annual "Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr." Advocacy Award from the New York State Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities and the New York State Assembly Committee on Mental Health; and be it further RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Clifton Perez.