

2015-K161

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 1-7, 2015, as School Social Workers Week in the State of New York

WHEREAS, School social workers serve as vital members of a school's education team, playing a central role in creating partnerships between the home, school, and community to ensure student academic success; and

WHEREAS, School social workers are especially skilled in providing services to students who face serious challenges to school success, including disability, poverty, discrimination, abuse, neglect, mental illness, homelessness, bullying, familial stressors, and other barriers to learning; and

WHEREAS, One in five school age children in New York State has a diagnosable mental disorder and one in 10 has a mental health problem severe enough to impair home, school, and/or community functioning; and

WHEREAS, Seventy-five to eighty percent of children and youth in need of mental health services do not receive them, the discrepancy being greater for minority children and children of poverty; and

WHEREAS, Those who wish to access community mental health services often find them unavailable, inaccessible, or inadequate; and

WHEREAS, School mental health programs are critical to early identification of and early intervention for mental health problems; and

WHEREAS, School social workers, being licensed mental health professionals in our schools, provide necessary assessment, interventions, counseling, family outreach, and community referrals; and

WHEREAS, School social workers are part of the New York State Safe Schools Task Force because their knowledge of school culture and school climate are necessary for responsible school safety planning; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, the high school graduation rate in New York State

was seventy-six percent, and approximately 60,000 high school students drop out annually; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that school mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, dropout rates and discipline referrals, while improving academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of School Social Workers Week highlights the vital role school social workers play in the lives of students in New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 1-7, 2015, as School Social Workers Week in the State of New York, and to honor and recognize the contributions of school social workers to the success of students in schools across the State, as well as encourage the people of New York State to observe School Social Workers Week with appropriate activities that promote awareness of the vital role of school social workers, in schools and in the community helping students prepare for their futures as productive, engaged citizens; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.