

2015-J1716

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May of 2015 as Williams Syndrome Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months that are set aside to increase awareness of serious issues that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May of 2015 as Williams Syndrome Awareness Month in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Williams Syndrome (WS) is a genetic condition that is present at birth and can affect anyone; it is characterized by medical problems, including cardiovascular disease, developmental delays, and learning disabilities; these often occur side by side with striking verbal abilities, highly social personalities and an affinity for music; and

WHEREAS, WS affects 1 in 10,000 people worldwide, an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people in the United States; it is known to occur equally in both males and females and in every culture; and

WHEREAS, Unlike disorders that can make connecting with your child difficult, children with Williams Syndrome tend to be social, friendly and endearing; parents often say the joy and perspective a child with WS brings into their lives has been unimaginable; and

WHEREAS, There are major struggles as well; many babies have life-threatening cardiovascular problems, and children with WS need costly and ongoing medical care and early interventions, such as speech or occupational therapy, that may not be covered by insurance or state funding; and

WHEREAS, As they grow, children with WS struggle with things like spatial relations, numbers, and abstract reasoning, which can make daily

tasks a challenge; as adults, most people with Williams Syndrome will need supportive housing to live to their fullest potential; many adults with WS contribute to their communities as volunteers or paid employees, often working at assisted living homes for senior citizens, hospitals and libraries, or as store greeters or veterinary aides; and

WHEREAS, As people with WS mature, beyond the structure of school and family activities, they often experience intense isolation which can lead to depression; they are extremely sociable and experience the normal need to connect with others; however, people with Williams syndrome often do not process nuanced social cues and this makes it difficult to form lasting relationships; and

WHEREAS, There are numerous common features of those inflicted with WS, including characteristic facial appearance, heart and blood vessel problems, hypercalcemia (elevated blood calcium levels), low birth-weight/slow weight gain, feeding problems, irritability (colic during infancy), dental abnormalities, kidney abnormalities, hernias, hyperacusis (sensitive hearing), musculoskeletal problems, overly friendly (excessively social) personality, and developmental delays, learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder; and

WHEREAS, The Williams Syndrome Association provides support to individuals with Williams Syndrome, their parents, and the professionals working with those children suffering from this syndrome; and

WHEREAS, WS is gaining wider popularity in the research field due to its unique characteristics; currently, there are also several research centers around the United States specializing in characteristics of Williams Syndrome; and

WHEREAS, According to the Williams Syndrome Association, it is imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious health issue, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, State and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to

memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May of 2015 as Williams Syndrome Awareness Month in the State of New York; 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.