

2015-K490

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Michael Seereiter upon the occasion of his designation as the recipient of the Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. Advocacy Award on May 11, 2015

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, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Michael Seereiter of Albany, New York, upon the occasion of his designation as the eleventh recipient of the annual "Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr." Advocacy Award presented at the 2015 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 May 11, 2015; 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, The tremendous efforts that Michael Seereiter has made to improve and enhance the lives of New Yorkers with disabilities are worthy of this recognition; and

WHEREAS, Michael Seereiter has been President/CEO of the New York State Rehabilitation Association, an organization representing rehabilitation providers that advocates on behalf of individuals with differing abilities and the agencies who provide those supports; and

WHEREAS, In this capacity, Michael Seereiter leads an organization that collaborates with stakeholders throughout systems that impact people with varying disabilities, including developmental disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, substance use disorders, and physical disabilities, to shape public policy; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Michael Seereiter also serves as the President/CEO of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Institute, an organization that serves as a resource to promote progressive and practical support and assistance to providers of services to people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Prior to joining the New York State Rehabilitation Association and the Rehabilitation Research and Training Institute, Michael Seereiter served as the Director of Planning for the New York State Office of Mental Health; and

WHEREAS, In that executive management team position, Michael Seereiter lead the strategic planning efforts of the agency, playing a critical role in the development of a plan now being implemented to fundamentally shift the focus of mental health supports in New York State from inpatient hospitals to community-based settings; and

WHEREAS, Before his work within the New York State Office of Mental Health, Michael Seereiter served as the Administrator of New York State's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant and the New York Makes Work Pay program where he lead a multi-state agency federally-funded grant program focused on creating competitive employment opportunities for people with varying disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Previously, Michael Seereiter served as the Director of Mental Hygiene Services in the New York State Governor's Office, where he had direct oversight responsibility for five state agencies, including the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, the New York State Office of Mental Health, and the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services; and

WHEREAS, Prior to joining the Governor's Office, Michael Seereiter served as the Director of Public Policy for the Mental Health Associ-

ation in New York State, Inc., playing a lead role in efforts to enact the mental health insurance parity law, known as Timothy's Law; and

WHEREAS, Michael Seereiter also served as Legislative Director for

then New York State Assembly Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee Chair, Marty Luster; and

WHEREAS, On a personal level, Michael Seereiter has a brother with Down syndrome, an experience he credits for helping to drive him into a professional career working on behalf of individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Michael Seereiter plays a key role in the organization and support of the services on which his brother relies, including the management and oversight of the direct support professional staff on which his brother relies to support his many volunteer and various other activities in the community on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, Michael Seereiter has dedicated both his professional and personal life to improving the lives of people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The initiatives that Michael Seereiter strives to implement as a passionate advocate for persons with disabilities mirror the priorities that this Assembled Body has before us today, the New York State Assembly Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day 2015; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved to honor Michael Seereiter, 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 Michael Seereiter upon the occasion of his designation as the recipient of the Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. Advocacy Award by the New York State Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Michael Seereiter.