

2015-J2795

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 which was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on October 3, 1965

WHEREAS, It is the duty of this Legislative Body to recognize and duly acknowledge the important moments in American life when our great nation realized the ideals of its founders; and

WHEREAS, On October 3, 1965, a major step was taken when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 at the Statue of Liberty, which had been introduced by Representative Emanuel Celler of New York and Senator Philip Hart of Michigan and passed both Houses of Congress with bipartisan support; and

WHEREAS, This legislation ended a system of immigration quotas in place since the 1920s, which had capped immigration from any country to the United States at two percent of the population born in that country living in the United States in 1890, allowed only 150,000 immigrants to enter the United States in any given year, and had come to be widely viewed as discriminatory, arbitrary, isolationist, and an impediment to commerce; and

WHEREAS, The doors to pursuing the American Dream have been opened to more than 30 million New Americans in the intervening decades since 1965, with nearly 90% of all new immigrants coming from Asia, Africa, and Latin America in 2013 as opposed to only 24.5% in 1960, and New York's immigrant population is second only to California's as of 2013, according to the Migration Policy Institute; and

WHEREAS, According to the Migration Policy Institute, the percentage of foreign-born Americans increased from 4.7% in 1970 to 13.1% in 2013; more than one in five New Yorkers is foreign-born, and, according to the History Channel, the United States increased its nonwhite share of its

population from 15% in 1965 to 33% in 2009; and

WHEREAS, The Great State of New York and the United States of America are made whole and rise to their potential as beacons of freedom in the world through the diverse heritage of their peoples, and as George Washington once stated, "I had always hoped that this land might become a safe and agreeable asylum to the virtuous and persecuted part of mankind, to whatever nation they might belong."; and

WHEREAS, Immigrant workers are estimated to contribute \$1.6 trillion (or 11 percent) to US GDP growth every year, according to a report by the Center for Immigration Studies, and immigrant workers increase profits to enterprises by more than what is paid to them, creating a beneficial surplus of capital in the economy; and

WHEREAS, The United States is and always has been a nation of immigrants and this is reflected in the numerous immigrant-founded major companies around the country, such as: Google, AT&T, Yahoo, EBay, DuPont, Pfizer, Intel, and, according to Forbes, 40% of Fortune 500 companies having been founded by either immigrants or their children; and

WHEREAS, The fact that almost every person born in the United States today is descended from immigrants, many of whom sought refuge from persecution, freedom to achieve the American Dream, and the spirit of adventure, has made the United States the freest, most prosperous, most diverse and open society in human history; and

WHEREAS, The central importance of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 to this story's continuation into modern times is cause for celebrating the fifty years of openness and pursuit of the Founding vision that has characterized present-day American immigration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 which was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on

October 3, 1965; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The United State Citizenship and Immigration Services Office in New York City.