

2015-J3764

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 400th Anniversary of the founding of the Town of Haverstraw, New York

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and commemorate the proud and distinguished histories of the people and communities which comprise the noble body of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concerns, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the founding of the Town of Haverstraw, New York; this auspicious occasion also marks the 350th Anniversary celebration of the incorporation of the Town of Haverstraw; and

WHEREAS, One of the oldest places listed on maps of North America, the Town of Haverstraw takes its name from the Dutch "Haverstroo," which means "Oat Straw," and refers to the waving straw of the Hudson River meadows; it first appeared on a map of the Northeast region in 1616; and

WHEREAS, In 1666, New York merchant Balthazar de Harte purchased a large tract of land along the river from local Native Americans who were part of the Delaware tribe of the Lenni Lenape confederation; five years later, he received a patent from the English government, which had just taken over the territory from the Dutch; and

WHEREAS, Established in 1719, the precinct of Haverstraw included the present day Towns of Clarkstown, Ramapo and Stony Point; the area officially became a town in 1788, and Clarkstown and Ramapo became separate towns in 1791; and

WHEREAS, During the Revolutionary War, Haverstraw played an important role in the defense of the colonies because of its central place on the Hudson between New York City and Albany, and near the dividing line between New England and other colonies; and

WHEREAS, The Residents of Haverstraw were proud American patriots, and

organized the Shore Guard to repel British or Tory landings along the Hudson; they also lit signal fires on top of High Tor to warn neighboring communities of danger; and

WHEREAS, In 1780, Haverstraw was the site of Benedict Arnold's plan to surrender West Point to the British; during the night of September 19th and 20th, the English Emissary, Major John Andre, met Arnold on a beach below the Long Cove in the Town of Haverstraw; the two continued their negotiations on the grounds of what is now Helen Hayes Hospital, but were ultimately unsuccessful; and

WHEREAS, From 1771 to 1941, Haverstraw became the greatest center of brick production in the Nation, if not the world, by utilizing the immense clay beds along the Hudson River's shores and beneath its surface; at one time over two thirds of the buildings in New York City were constructed of Haverstraw brick; and

WHEREAS, At the beginning of the 20th century, the Town of Haverstraw gained two important institutions: the New York State Hospital for the Care of Crippled and Deformed Children, and Letchworth Village; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Hospital for the Care of Crippled and Deformed Children opened in 1905, and became world famous for its rehabilitation and research programs; it was later renamed the Helen Hayes Hospital in recognition of the actress's tremendous service to the institution; and

WHEREAS, Letchworth Village opened in 1911, and within a few years, became one of the largest and most progressive facilities for the mentally challenged in the United States; it officially closed in 1996; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, the Town of Haverstraw has experienced numerous waves of immigration which have contributed to the great diversity

which has become its hallmark; English and Scotch Irish settlers followed the Dutch to be joined by later migrations of French, Irish, German, and other European peoples; African-Americans also came into the

area from the south after World War II, to be joined by immigrants from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic in the 1950s and 1960s; and WHEREAS, Today, the Town of Haverstraw is a diverse community with residents old and new from all over the world; it remains proud of its history, and vital service to our Nation, and looks forward to continuing its great traditions in the future; and

WHEREAS, Remaining fruitful over the ebb and flow of decades of growth and change, the Town of Haverstraw continues its commitment to enhancing the quality of life of its citizens, ensuring a positive business, institutional and educational climate, and providing all essential services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Town Haverstraw, New York, recognizing the significance of the role it continues to play in the life of the community of the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Howard T. Philips, Jr. Supervisor, Town of Haverstraw.