

2015-J3825

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 2016, as Irish American Heritage Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, From America's earliest days, Irish immigrants and their descendants have contributed leadership, wisdom, and vitality to America, through nine signers of the Declaration of Independence and 22 Presidents with Irish roots as well as the indelible mark Irish Americans have made in the shaping of the great State and City of New York, through numerous Governors, Legislators, Mayors and public officials; and

WHEREAS, Throughout their long history, the Irish have been ardent in their passion for liberty, hatred of oppression and renowned for their loyalty and thus, the Irish have, from the beginning, been prominent in the defense of this Nation, with 20 of George Washington's generals and an estimated quarter of his Army being composed of Irish Americans, among them Timothy Murphy, a hero of the pivotal battle of Saratoga, New York; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have distinguished themselves ever since whenever their country has called on them, as typified in the storied "Fighting 69th" of New York who fought with courage and sacrifice on the Battlefields of the American Civil War, World War I and whose Gaelic battle cry of "Faugh an Bealach" is still heard this day in Iraq and Afghanistan in defense of our country; and

WHEREAS, The first Congressional Medal of Honor for the current conflict in Afghanistan was awarded to Navy Seal Lieutenant Michael P. Murphy of Smithtown, New York, who made the supreme sacrifice for his country; and

WHEREAS, Millions of Irish arrived in New York City in the mid-19th Century, escaping hunger and injustice in their homeland, and where New York has long been a haven for immigrants, being the home of the "golden door" of Ellis Island, where the first immigrant to enter through its passages to a new life in America was 15 year-old Annie Moore of Cork, Ireland; and

WHEREAS, Irish immigrants and their descendants have contributed to the building of this great society not only by the laying of railroads and the building of physical bridges, but also by building bridges of the mind amongst all people through the founding of numerous schools, colleges and universities, enhancing the quality of every phase of life for all New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Irish American women have a long and proud tradition of being visionaries and trailblazers, whether it be Annie Sullivan, the teacher of Helen Keller, crusading journalist Nelly Bly or New York's own Colonel Eileen Collins, the first woman to command a Space Shuttle; and

WHEREAS, Since 1762, Irish New Yorkers have been faithfully celebrating the feast of St. Patrick every March 17th, wherein they renew their connections to the land of their ancestry, pass on their traditions to the next generation, and share their pride through joyous festivities enjoyed by all New Yorkers irrespective of ethnicity; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have made an indelible impression upon every human endeavor in art, music, literature, science, film, dance, theatre, sports, education, law, finance, and politics and shall continue to embellish New York's shining future, reflecting the noble past of this mighty race, with all the strength, resilience, humor and hospitality of the Irish character; it is most fitting to set aside this month to highlight and honor the history and heritage of the Irish Americans and to

remember and pay tribute to the contributions they have made to our State and our Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 2016, as Irish American Heritage 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.