

## 2015-J4135

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 20th Anniversary of The Ride for Missing Children Central New York on June 3, 2016

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to those renowned organizations which devote their energy, resources and thoughtful care to improving the quality of life in their communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of The Ride for Missing Children Central New York on Friday, June 3, 2016; and

WHEREAS, The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping prevent child abduction and sexual exploitation, finding missing children, and assisting victims of abduction and sexual exploitation as well as their families and the professionals who serve them; and

WHEREAS, What started as a small group of bicyclists that hoped to raise awareness for the plight of one missing child has grown into the biggest annual fundraiser for The National Center For Missing & Exploited Children - New York/Mohawk Valley Office (NCMEC-NY/MV); and

WHEREAS, That one missing child was named Sara Anne Wood; tragically, this young girl disappeared while walking her bike home in 1993; the Greater Mohawk Valley community rallied together around her family to help raise awareness of her disappearance; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, Sara Anne Wood's father, Bob and six other men teamed up to further raise national awareness of the plight of the many missing and exploited children and to bring a message of safety to the people they met along the way; deemed Sara's Ride, the men rode their bicycles from Norwich Corners, New York, where Sara was abducted, to the

Capitol steps in Washington, D. C.; and

WHEREAS, Bob Wood and his fellow bicyclists arrived on the Capitol steps on May 25, 1995, the first National Missing Children's Day; two years later, inspired by the first Ride, a group of 43 riders rode their bicycles 100 miles from Albany, New York, to Utica, New York, bearing the same message of safety and awareness, thus beginning the Annual Ride For Missing Children; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of The Ride For Missing Children (The Ride) is to honor the memory of all missing children, raise public awareness of the plight of all missing and exploited children and the need for child safety education, and raise funds to support the missing children poster distribution, community education for the prevention of child abduction and sexual exploitation, and the mission of NCMEC-NY/MV in serving its community here and across New York State; and

WHEREAS, The Ride is a one-day, 100-mile bike ride that stops at schools along the route to bring a message of safety; all participating Riders make a vow to raise a minimum of \$500 and to support the mission and goals of The Ride and NCMEC-NY/MV; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the year, riders and volunteers attend monthly meetings to understand the importance of why people Ride, and to conduct Ride business; and

WHEREAS, Participants learn that this spectacular event is not only about a bike ride, but also about raising awareness of the plight of missing children, and spreading a message of abduction prevention and of hope; this incredible group strives to "make our children safer....one child at a time"; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the last two decades, The Ride has grown steadily each year; currently, there are over 450 Rider participants; there are

now five Rides for Missing Children events held throughout New York State; and

WHEREAS, An emotionally draining event, each rider wears a pin repres-

enting the child whom they are riding for; the route taken represents an open path which signifies that this vital organization's work is never done, that there will always be hope and to never stop searching for a missing child; and

WHEREAS, A community-affirming event, The Ride is a time to remember those missing and exploited children who have suffered what no child should have to endure; it is an occasion for people to comfort and console one another, and a night to celebrate those who have survived; and

WHEREAS, The success of The Ride is in direct correlation to the efforts of its volunteers and participants, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the organization and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, This auspicious occasion presents an opportunity for this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to The Ride for Missing Children Central New York; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when organizations and individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be recognized and applauded by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of The Ride for Missing Children Central New York on June 3, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Ride for Missing Children Central New York.