

## 2015-J4427

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Kayla McKeon upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the 2016 Champion of Change Self-Advocate of the Year Award by the National Down Syndrome Society

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and recognize those dedicated and talented individuals within our midst, who have and continue to inspire their communities through their tireless efforts and their outstanding professional and personal accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is hereby justly proud to honor Kayla McKeon upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the 2016 Champion of Change Self-Advocate of the Year Award by the National Down Syndrome Society, to be celebrated at an Award Ceremony in Washington, D.C. on April 11, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Kayla McKeon of Cicero, New York, is a motivational speaker and community advocate with Down Syndrome whose positive attitude has inspired countless others to reach their highest potential; and

WHEREAS, As a motivational speaker, Kayla McKeon has delivered speeches at various venues, such as public schools and universities, throughout Central New York and the entire State of New York; in addition, she has conducted several media interviews to help raise community awareness about Down Syndrome; and

WHEREAS, Through her dedicated and enthusiastic advocacy, Kayla McKeon has proudly served as a strong voice for others with Down Syndrome; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, Kayla McKeon lobbied state legislators to help pass the New York Achieving a Better Life Experience (NY ABLE) Act, which has since been signed into law by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo; the NY ABLE Act will allow people with disabilities and their families to set up separate, tax-exempt savings accounts to help them retain more of their own

money; and

WHEREAS, Kayla McKeon met with state lawmakers and used social media and speaking engagements to help gain increased support for the NY ABLE Act; and

WHEREAS, An accomplished athlete, Kayla McKeon has competed in a variety of Special Olympics events, including floor hockey, track and field, and bocce since she was 13 years old on both the State and National level; and

WHEREAS, In June of 2011, Kayla McKeon became a World Games Athlete, proudly representing the United States and the State of New York in Athens, Greece, and ultimately, brought home a Silver and Bronze Medal in bocce; and

WHEREAS, An enthusiastic worker, Kayla McKeon is employed at Gigi's Playhouse in Syracuse, New York, and serves as an intern at Congressman John Katko's office; this incredible young woman also holds the position of Special Olympic Congressional Ambassador and Emissary of the Shriver Global Messenger program; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Kayla McKeon volunteers her time and energies at numerous community organizations, such as the YMCA, and is pursuing her associate's degree at both Onondaga Community and LeMoyne Colleges; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to excellence certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause to hereby honor and recognize Kayla McKeon upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of

the 2016 Champion of Change Self-Advocate of the Year Award by the National Down Syndrome Society; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Kayla McKeon.