

2015-J4911

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 10-16, 2016, as Crime Victims' Rights Week in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official weeks set aside to increase awareness of serious issues which affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 10-16, 2016, as Crime Victims' Rights Week in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week; and

WHEREAS, For the past three decades, Americans have joined together to recognize the needs and rights of crime victims and survivors during National Crime Victims' Rights Week; and

WHEREAS, Every man, woman and child who is victimized by crime in America deserves to be treated with dignity and compassion, and deserves services and support to help them in the aftermath of crime; and

WHEREAS, 22 million Americans are directly harmed by crime each year, and each crime affects many more family members, friends, neighbors, and co-workers; and

WHEREAS, Crime can leave a lasting physical, emotional, and financial impact on people of all ages and abilities, and of all economic, racial, and social backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, In addition to these challenges, crime victims face a criminal, military, and juvenile justice system that, at times, ignores their rights and treats them with disrespect; and

WHEREAS, In 1982, the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime envi-

sioned a national commitment to a more equitable and supportive response to victims; and

WHEREAS, The nation heeded this call to action and promoted victims' rights initiatives, effective and compassionate victim services, and just compensation and financial support; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, the Crime Victims Fund was established by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to provide a permanent source of support for crime victim services and compensation through fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders; and

WHEREAS, Today, thousands of victim assistance programs provide help and support to child victims of violence and sexual abuse; stalking victims; survivors of homicide victims; victims of drunk-driving crashes; and victims of domestic, dating, and sexual violence and other crimes; and

WHEREAS, The victim assistance community faces new challenges to reach and serve all victims, including victims of new crimes like cybercrime and terrorism and victims who have not always trusted the criminal justice system, including immigrant victims, urban youth, and victims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning; and

WHEREAS, While New York State has adopted laws to protect the rights of victims of crime and provide them with essential services, it remains the responsibility of all citizens to ensure that these laws are upheld; and

WHEREAS, Important efforts have been implemented to ensure treatment to help victims begin healing; among the volunteers and professionals who work toward this are law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim service providers, correction officers, parole and probation officers, counselors, physicians, health care professionals, and the many others

whose dedication and service to crime victims help lessen trauma and assist in personal recovery; and

WHEREAS, Now is the time to embrace new solutions that involve new

partnerships with underserved communities and a greater emphasis on learning what works in meeting victims' needs; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Justice, through the Vision 21 initiative, calls for a renewed commitment to serving all victims of crime in the 21st Century; and

WHEREAS, National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 10-16, 2016, provides an opportunity to celebrate the energy, creativity, and commitment that launched the victims' rights movement, inspired its progress, and continues to advance the cause of justice for crime victims; and

WHEREAS, Respect and dignity are basic rights of all those who have been victimized by crime and those responsible must be held accountable for their actions; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious issue, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, State and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 10-16, 2016, as Crime Victims' Rights Week in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week; 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.