

2015-J5304

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, 2016, in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who have fallen in battle to preserve beliefs, ideals and principles upheld by these United States, do so profoundly strengthen our shared commitment to the exercise of freedom; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such duty and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to commemorate Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, 2016, in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Monday, May 30, 2016, will be solemnly marked throughout the United States of America as Memorial Day, a day of national mourning for those Americans who gave their lives in the defense of their country, in times of war, and times of peace, in police actions and minor skirmishes, in peacekeeping roles and missions to foreign lands to uphold the cherished principles of liberty and democracy, upon which the Republic was founded; and

WHEREAS, A legacy of the Civil War, Memorial Day is a timeless holiday; and

WHEREAS, New York State was the first State to formally recognize Memorial Day, then known as Decoration Day, as a holiday to honor our fallen veterans; Memorial Day is not a celebration, but rather a day of taking time out for remembrance as characterized by our ancestors, who observed the day by taking time out to remember family members and neighbors who lost their lives in the Civil War that divided our nation; and

WHEREAS, In commemorating May 30, 2016, Memorial Day, this Legislative Body also pays homage to the more than 576,000 Americans who, during 10

major wars, have made the supreme sacrifice for their country; from Lexington and Concord to Iwo Jima; from Yorktown to Gettysburg; from New Orleans to San Juan Hill; from Antietam to Omaha Beach; from Inchon to Ardennes, as well as all the fields of battle where men and women have fallen for the cause of our freedom; and

WHEREAS, This Memorial Day we will also remember those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and who have died as the result of the war on terrorism and the liberation of all people who seek and believe in freedom, liberty and human rights; and

WHEREAS, For decades, veterans organizations have solicited contributions for poppies, handmade by hospitalized veterans, worn to mark America's war dead; the use of the poppy as a Memorial Day custom has roots in the poem "In Flanders Field," written to salute those killed during World War I; the proceeds of the sale are put into funds administered by individual veterans posts to help veterans; and

WHEREAS, We, the duly elected members of this Legislative Body, can mark this solemn occasion with no greater remembrance than the words of the 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, when he dedicated the National Cemetery at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863: "We ... have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that this nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense we cannot dedicate -- we cannot consecrate -- we cannot hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so

nobly advanced. It is rather for us, to be dedicated to the great tasks remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave the full measure of devotion;

that we here last highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, 2016, in the State of New York, gratefully acknowledging all those who have come before us and who, seeing their duty, have served this country so valiantly and honorably when called, preserving our freedom, our liberty and our safety, placing themselves in harm's way to keep America safe; and be it further RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to esteemed Veterans organizations of New York State.