

2021-J2056

Senate Resolution No. 2056

BY: Senator JORDAN

MOURNING the death of former New York State Senator Joseph L. Bruno, dedicated political leader and strong advocate for the people of this great Empire State

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body, representing the people of the State of New York, is moved this day to pay tribute to an eminent gentleman of indomitable faith and dedication whose public service and countless accomplishments will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Joseph L. Bruno, noting the significance of his purposeful life and triumphs; and

WHEREAS, Joseph L. Bruno of Brunswick, New York, whose political clout shaped some of the Capital Region's largest economic achievements, died on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, at the age of 91; and

WHEREAS, Serving as New York State's Senate Majority Leader for 14 years, Joseph L. Bruno was a true giant for his community, for middle-class tax payers, and for Upstate New York; his handshake was his bond, and in the chamber, he was consistently forthright with his opinion yet could agree to disagree, always maintaining mutual respect across party lines; and

WHEREAS, Joseph L. Bruno was born on April 8, 1929, at the Glens Falls, New York home of his parents, Vitaliano and Rachael Catherine (Ricciardelli) Bruno, both of whom emigrated from Italy with their families; he attended St. Mary's Academy where he learned Latin, and became the top altar boy at his church; and

WHEREAS, The third-oldest of eight children, Joseph L. Bruno established a strong work ethic at an early age; at just nine years-old, he began delivering pastries before school to earn money for his family to buy food, and a year later, he took a job selling the local newspaper on street corners, receiving three cents for every paper sold; and

WHEREAS, Joseph L. Bruno went on to earn a business degree from Skidmore College before valiantly serving his country as a member of the United States Army during the Korean War; he was promoted to Sergeant First Class, and received a Bronze Service Star among other honors; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, while proudly serving overseas, this extraordinary man became the undefeated light heavyweight champion of the 25th Infantry Division; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his military service, Joseph L. Bruno worked in various businesses as a salesman before starting a company called Coradian, successfully marketing the first digital phone systems and office intercoms to government and business; and

WHEREAS, Joseph L. Bruno began his illustrious political career when he joined the campaign staff of Governor Nelson Rockefeller in 1966, and later became a special assistant to State Assembly Speaker Perry Duryea; in 1976, he was elected to the New York State Senate's 43rd District, representing Rensselaer and part of Saratoga counties; and

WHEREAS, In 1978, while Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Consumer Protection, the Motor Vehicle Warranty Replacement or Refund Act, commonly referred to as the "Lemon Law," was passed; this legislation would later become one of his landmark achievements; and

WHEREAS, Senator Joseph L. Bruno gained distinction as a toe-to-toe lawmaker who brazenly challenged governors and who preferred climbing the stairs to taking the elevator; during his tenure, he was instrumental in New York State's economic development, and in reforming the criminal justice system to keep violent criminals behind bars; and

WHEREAS, He also championed New York business interests and tax cuts, and steadfastly supported many labor unions, including Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union, a support brought on after watching his father endure years of abuse in low-paying jobs; and

WHEREAS, Joseph L. Bruno truly believed in the well-being of people who worked in bars and restaurants and consequently, was influential in passing an indoor smoking ban in March of 2003; the amendment to the 1989 Clean Indoor Air Act of 1989 banned smoking in bars, restaurants, and other locations, including membership clubs like the VFW or Elks, which hire people to staff their clubs; and

WHEREAS, Joseph L. Bruno is revered throughout the Capital Region for his tireless efforts to steer millions of dollars to upstate New York; the 4,500-seat minor league baseball stadium at Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC), dubbed The Joe, is named in his honor along with parks, pavilions and a control room at the public broadcaster WMHT; and

WHEREAS, Joseph L. Bruno also exerted much of his political muscle in helping to improve the region's transportation hubs, such as the

Rensselaer Rail Station, and in creating a foundation for biotechnology and nanotechnology industries across Upstate New York, including the GlobalFoundaries computer-chip fabrication plant in Malta; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his wife of 57 years, Barbara "Bobbie" Bruno, Joseph L. Bruno is survived by his loving partner, Kay Stafford; four children, Joseph, Susan, Kenneth and Catherine; seven grandchildren, Rachel, Nicholas, Richard, Elizabeth, Anna, Victoria and Aiden; and one great-grandchild, Alessandra; as well as his sister, Florence, and four brothers, Vitaliano, Arthur, Tony and Robert; and

WHEREAS, Uncle Joe, as he was so affectionately known by those who knew and worked with him, was a true man of the people who never forgot where he came from; he lived his life with purpose and gusto, and his legacy will forever serve as a beacon of love for his family, friends, and all who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing man; and

WHEREAS, Every citizen in New York State has most certainly benefited, in one way or another, from the deep dedication, intelligence

and commitment Joseph L. Bruno brought to his work as a legislator and public policy-maker; a loyal friend and trusted advisor, he will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of former New York State Senator Joseph L. Bruno, and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Joseph L. Bruno.

