

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Elizabeth Gaynes upon the occasion of being honored in conjunction with Women's History Month 2014 in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those women of achievement within the Empire State who have made strong contributions to their communities and who inspire others through their model citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Elizabeth Gaynes upon the occasion of being honored in conjunction with Women's History Month 2014 in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made invaluable contributions to the growth and strength of New York State in countless recorded and unrecorded ways; and

WHEREAS, Each year, the State of New York officially sets aside time to recognize the achievements and lives of such exemplary women, representatives of the wide-ranging and vital roles women have played in the historic development of this great Empire State and its communities; the theme of this year's commemoration is "Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and Commitment"; and

WHEREAS, Attorney Elizabeth Gaynes is one of the United States' foremost prisoner justice advocates; throughout her illustrious legal career, she has consistently epitomized the values of character, courage, and commitment in her unwavering service to her peers, colleagues, and fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Gaynes is the Executive Director of the Osborne Association, one of the largest multi-service criminal justice organizations in the nation; guided by her visionary leadership for 28 years, the organization works in collaboration with New York State and New York City criminal justice, child welfare and health agencies to provide innovative and successful services to incarcerated individuals, their children, and their families; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Gaynes has an abiding and demonstrated commitment to enhancing the fairness and humanity of the criminal justice system; she began her legal career as a criminal defense attorney working at a Buffalo law firm, and later joined the Albany Law School Legal Assistance Project, which provided representation on civil legal matters to men at four New York State prisons; before assuming the helm of the Osborne Association, she was an Associate at the Pretrial Services Resource Center, now known as the Pretrial Justice Institute, in Washington DC; and

WHEREAS, The wide-ranging scope of Elizabeth Gaynes' work is a strong indication of her astuteness and compassion; in 1985 she spearheaded the creation of Family Works, a long-running comprehensive parenting program in a men's state prison, and she has a leadership role in the New York Initiative on Children of Incarcerated Parents, a collaborative system reform project committed to meeting the needs and protecting the rights of children with parents in prison; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Gaynes is widely known and has gained international recognition for her efforts; in 2004, she, along with her daughter Emani Davis, was the first American to be nominated for the prestigious international award, World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, for their work defending the children of prisoners; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the entire period of her service to her community, the State of New York, and the nation, Elizabeth Gaynes has stood constant in dignity, good grace and humor; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to

express its highest admiration for Elizabeth Gaynes, and to wish her continued success in all of her future endeavors; and

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

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Elizabeth Gaynes upon the occasion of being honored in conjunction with Women's History Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Elizabeth Gaynes.