

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week; and

WHEREAS, For the first time since the Vietnam War, America's Veterans Administration (VA) and military hospitals are caring for a large number of war-wounded; many servicemen and servicewomen are seriously wounded and are unable to return to duty; once they are discharged from active duty, they are then treated in the VA hospital system; and

WHEREAS, The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week is observed annually during the week of Valentine's Day, a day of caring and sharing which underscores the Salute's expression of honor and appreciation to inpatient and outpatient veterans; and

WHEREAS, National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week will be celebrated February 10-16, 2013, to say thank you and to show support to the men and women who have honorably served our country and borne the battle in defending freedom, not only at home but throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, In addition, the purpose of the National Salute is to increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical centers, and to encourage citizens to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as volunteers; and

WHEREAS, The annual VA National Salute program began in 1978 when VA took over sponsorship of a program which started in 1974 by the humanitarian organization No Greater Love, Inc.; the staff of the VA Voluntary Service plan and execute local events and activities at VA medical centers; and

WHEREAS, Local celebrities, youth groups, members of the general public, and veterans service organizations visit patients at VA medical centers, nursing homes, state veteran homes, and other facilities; and

WHEREAS, For the 21st consecutive year, the nationally syndicated column started by Ann Landers, now called "Ask Annie," has devoted a column to the National Salute, asking readers to send Valentine's Day cards and letters to hospitalized veterans at VA medical centers; subsequently, more than one million cards and letters are sent to VA patients during the National Salute; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited their patriotism both at home and abroad, these men and women demonstrated their love for their country and merit forevermore, the highest respect of their State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations and most proudly commemorate National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Health Care Systems and VA medical centers throughout the State of New York.