

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 20, 2014, as Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness of serious public health issues that affect the lives of the residents of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is moved to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 20, 2014, as Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS, National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NNHAAD) is a national mobilization effort designed to encourage Natives (American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians) across the United States and Territorial Areas to get educated, get tested, get involved in prevention and get treated for HIV and AIDS; and

WHEREAS, The first day of Spring, March 20, was selected as the annual date to observe NNHAAD by participants in a national survey, who chose it due to the significance of this day in many Native cultures across the United States; Spring represents a time of equality and balance as the only day when day and night are at equal lengths; it is considered a time of profound change, new beginnings and birth, a celebration of life for all people; and

WHEREAS, HIV is a public health issue among the approximately 5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the United States, representing about 1.7% of the population; and

WHEREAS, The impact of HIV/AIDS in these communities is disproportionate to the size of their population; Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders and American Indians/Alaska Natives have the 3rd and 4th highest rate of new HIV infections, respectively; in 2008, the rate was 22.85 per 100,000 persons for Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders, and 11.9 per 100,000 for American Indians/Alaska Natives, compared to 8.2 per 100,000 for Whites; and

WHEREAS, Although national estimates show that Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are not greatly affected by HIV, current estimates of HIV and AIDS diagnoses among this population may be too low because of race/ethnicity misclassification, potentially masking the real impact of HIV on this population; and

WHEREAS, Of persons who were diagnosed with AIDS, American Indians and Alaskan Natives with AIDS survived a shorter time than other races and ethnicities; and

WHEREAS, American Indians/Alaska Natives face significant HIV prevention challenges, including poverty, high rates of STIs, and stigma; and

WHEREAS, It is crucial that days such as National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day are observed in order to continue to raise awareness and eventually halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, not only among American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, but across all communities throughout the State of New York, the United States of America, and around the world; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 20, 2014, as Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be tran-

mitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.