

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating 111 years of Panamanian Independence from Spain on November 3, 2014

WHEREAS, Prior to Spanish colonization, Panama was inhabited by the Cuevas and Coele tribes who were largely decimated by disease and fighting upon arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s; and

WHEREAS, The Spanish came to Panama in pursuit of gold and other valuables; the first to land in Panama was Rodrigo de Bastidas, and one year later, Christopher Columbus, who established a short-lived settlement in the Darien; and

WHEREAS, The first trans-Panamanian trek by Vasco Nunez de Balboa proved that the Isthmus was the path between the seas and would be for centuries to come; and

WHEREAS, Panama became the path for gold and silver which were hauled by ship from South America, by land across the Isthmus and then reshipped to Spain; this route became known as the Camino Real, the Royal Road, though it was more commonly known as the Road of the Crosses; and

WHEREAS, Panama would remain a part of the Spanish empire for more than 300 years and their identity would be based on the sense of "geographic destiny"; the Isthmus was of paramount importance to Spain and the rest of the world; and

WHEREAS, On November 28, 1821, Panama was liberated from Spain, but was assumed under Colombian rule; and

WHEREAS, Between 1880 and 1890, a French company under Ferdinand de Lesseps made an unsuccessful attempt to construct a sea-level canal where the U.S. developed canal now sits; and

WHEREAS, On November 3, 1903, Panama entered the Hay/Bunau-Varilla treaty with the United States which granted a significant right-of-way to a zone 10 miles wide and 50 miles long in which the canal was dredged, operated and fortified by U.S. forces; and

WHEREAS, Signing the November 3, 1903, treaty with the United States occurred parallel to a proclamation of separation from Colombia, known as "Separation Day" in Panama; Panama also celebrates the anniversary of their independence from Spain on November 28th; and

WHEREAS, Many Panamanians have made New York their home, and this Legislative Body is justly proud to thank the Panamanian people for their contributions to this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate 111 years of Panamanian Independence from Spain on November 3, 2014.