LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 2016 as Autism Awareness Month in the State of New York

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

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 2016 as Autism Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with National Autism Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Each April for the past four decades, National Autism Awareness Month has elevated awareness and educated the public about autism and issues within the autism community; and

WHEREAS, One in 68 children in the United States is affected by autism, Asperger's or Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), estimated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

WHEREAS, In addition to these already staggering statistics, the CDC reports that one in every 98 African-American children is diagnosed with autism with a 1.6 year delay in diagnosis when compared to Caucasian children; and

WHEREAS, Parents tend to overlook the early signs of autism spectrum disorders, assuming their child is just going through a phase or having an off day; and

WHEREAS, It is important for parents to differentiate these assumptions from the symptoms, which can present in many different forms; and

WHEREAS, Autism is a spectrum disorder, meaning there can be great variation in the way it affects people; each child on the autism spectrum possesses unique abilities, symptoms and challenges, according to autism expert Dr. Willis Holloway; and

WHEREAS, However, many children on the spectrum often share common core symptoms which include: impaired social interactions, such as reluctance to join group activities at school, not being aware of the needs of others, or inability to understand humor; impaired communication, such as delay in language development, unusual repetition of words and phrases spoken by others or on television, or major difficulty sustaining a conversation; and restricted interests, repetitive behaviors, and stereotyped mannerisms, such as clapping, finger flicking, rocking, dipping, and swaying, fascination with parts of an object or preoccupation with one narrow interest such as dates or numbers; and

WHEREAS, While medications are available for some common behavioral symptoms like irritability or anxiety, there are no FDA-approved drugs to treat any of the core symptoms of these conditions; and

WHEREAS, Autism is a disease with significant unmet patient needs and is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others; and

WHEREAS, Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a spectrum disorder that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees; and

WHEREAS, There is no known single cause of autism; in March of 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued their ADDM autism prevalence report which concluded that the prevalence of autism had risen to one in every 68 births in the United States and almost one in 54 boys; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious health issue, and more must be done to increase activity at

the local, State and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 2016 as Autism Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with National Autism Awareness Month; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.