

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending March of Dimes upon the occasion of hosting its annual March for Babies event to be held April 24, 2016

WHEREAS, The March of Dimes Foundation is a pioneer in improving the health of infants and women of childbearing age by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, In 1938, inspired by his own personal struggle with polio, President Franklin D. Roosevelt founded the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, better known as March of Dimes; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes funded vital research for the development of vaccines that effectively ended the polio epidemic in the United States; and

WHEREAS, After accomplishing the organization's initial goal, March of Dimes turned its efforts to preventing birth defects and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes has worked tirelessly to support genetic research, promote newborn screening, and educate medical professionals and the public on best practices for healthy pregnancies to ensure all babies can have the best start to life; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, March of Dimes initiated a Prematurity Campaign to raise awareness, research causes and prevention, and expand access to care to reduce the nation's preterm birth rate and enable all mothers to have healthy, full-term pregnancies; and

WHEREAS, March of Dimes' annual March for Babies fundraiser was first established in 1970 and has raised over \$2 billion to support critical research and programs for the prevention of birth defects, prematurity, and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, Each year, March for Babies events are held in hundreds of communities with the support of more than 20,000 company teams, families, and national sponsors; and

WHEREAS, The New York City March for Babies will be held on Sunday, April 24, 2016, and is expected to draw thousands of participants and raise \$2.3 million in proceeds for March of Dimes; and

WHEREAS, This year's event will be led by March for Babies ambassador Mariana, who was born 15 weeks prematurely and faced many life-threatening illnesses and open-heart surgery over a five-month stay in the Neonatal Infant Care Unit (NICU); and

WHEREAS, Today, Mariana is thriving and her strength and resilience have inspired her family, including her parents Damaris Hernandez and Joe Gilbert and her four-month-old baby brother, to join the March for Babies to help future families and honor the memory of those who joined Mariana in the NICU and never made it home; and

WHEREAS, For the 10th straight year, the New York City March for Babies will be led by Celebrity Chairman Eli Manning, who has dedicated himself to supporting the mission of March of Dimes and improving the health and well-being of infants and children; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize the organizers and participants of the March for Babies and the entire March of Dimes organization for their invaluable contributions to children and families in New York State and across the nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend March of Dimes upon the occasion of hosting its annual March for Babies event to be held Sunday, April 24, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to March of Dimes.