

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION congratulating Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash upon the occasion of capturing a Gold Medal in the 400-Meter track event at the 2016 Invictus Games

WHEREAS, Athletic competition enhances the moral and physical development of the young people of this State, preparing them for the future by instilling in them the value of hard work, encouraging a standard of healthy living, imparting a desire for success and developing a sense of fair play and competition; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor those exceptional military personnel who distinguish themselves and their community through both their courageous service and outstanding athletic performance; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to congratulate Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash upon the occasion of capturing a Gold Medal in the 400-Meter track event at the 2016 Invictus Games held from May 8-12, 2016, in Orlando, Florida; and

WHEREAS, The Invictus Games is an international Paralympic-style, multi-sport event created by Prince Harry to host wounded, injured, or sick military personnel; it features 10 sporting events with athletes from 15 participating nations; and

WHEREAS, During the 2016 Invictus Games, Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash won a Gold Medal in the 400-Meter track event; he also came in fourth in the 1,500-Meters; and

WHEREAS, A native of Schenectady, New York, Zachary Burnash is the son of Thomas and Carolyn Burnash and a graduate of Schenectady High School; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash has proudly served his country as a member of the United States Air Force in both Iraq and Afghanistan; during this time he was awarded a Purple Heart, Air Force Commendation Medal and the Captain Lance P. Sijan Leadership Award for his heroic efforts; and

WHEREAS, While on duty in Afghanistan in 2011, this courageous soldier suffered injuries during an attack by the enemy; with a true commitment to service, he was able to return to duty with his unit in Afghanistan two months later as an operations noncommissioned officer; and

WHEREAS, Following his return home, Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash participated in the adaptive sports program and at the 2015 Air Force Trials at Nellis Air Force Base, and performed so well that he was selected to be on the Air Force team; and

WHEREAS, During the Department of Defense's 2015 Warrior Games in Quantico, Virginia, Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash helped his Air Force team place third; he also won a Gold Medal in men's 800-meter competition, and performed well in track, swimming, wheelchair basketball, sitting volleyball and cycling; and

WHEREAS, Currently, Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash is an Explosives Ordnance Disposal noncommissioned officer with the 87th Civil Engineer Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix; and

WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash, in achieving such high military and athletic honors, may take just pride in the inspiration and contribution to the spirit of excellence he brings to his family, friends, community and Nation; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved to honor Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash, a brave serviceman and extraordinary athlete, recognizing the tremendous sacrifice of his labors and his selfless dedication to the defense of freedom and democracy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to

congratulate Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash upon the occasion of capturing a Gold Medal at the 2016 Invictus Games; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Staff Sergeant Zachary Burnash.