LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION urging the New York State Congressional delegation to prevent the United States Department of Education from withholding Federal funds from states or taking any other punitive action on the basis of students' standardized test participation rates

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and respect the rights of parents to decide what is best for their children as it relates to refusing to have their children participate in high-stakes, developmentally inappropriate standardized tests; and

WHEREAS, It is right and just to grant states, individual school districts and educators the sovereignty to develop a weighted promotion system as it relates to the evaluation of a school teacher's performance; and

WHEREAS, The rigor of the recently administered Common Core tests for children in grades three through eight is excessive and causes many of these students undue and severe emotional trauma; and

WHEREAS, The very concept of a centralized government in a free nation forcing a curriculum on children that places an over-emphasis on the over utilization of high stakes standardized tests in a way that is disproportionate to accurately evaluating a student's performance in the classroom is heavy-handed in nature and counter to the American way and the tenets of our educational system; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan himself acknowledged serious flaws in the standardized tests that currently drive American schools, telling an audience of education researchers in 2013 that the tests are an inadequate gauge of student and teacher performance; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds and thousands of New York parents have demonstrated their frustration with this culture of testing by opting their kids out of the grades three through eight Common Core tests this year; and

WHEREAS, As a result of thousands of New York parents exercising their rights to determine their kids' educational futures, the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has threatened to impose sanctions and penalties against states that fail to comply with certain participation levels in these tests; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pauses in its deliberations to urge the New York State Congressional delegation to use all means in their power including introduction and passage of legislation to protect the rights of parents to decide what is best for their child's education when it comes to participation in high stakes Common Core testing and protecting New York State schools from being penalized for low participation rates by the United States Department of Education in the form of withholding Federal funds or taking any other punitive action on the basis of students' standardized test participation rates; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to President Barack Obama, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, Speaker of the House John Boehner, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, Senator Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and each member of the New York State Congressional delegation.