

BY: Senator PARKER

COMMEMORATING the 152nd Anniversary of the passing
of the Thirteenth Amendment

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to commemorate significant events which represent turning points in our unique history and which are indelibly etched in the saga of our great Nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 152nd Anniversary of the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment; and

WHEREAS, When the Thirteenth Amendment was proposed, there had been no new amendments adopted in more than 60 years; and

WHEREAS, During the secession crisis, but prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, the majority of slavery-related bills had protected slavery; and

WHEREAS, The United States had ceased slave importation and intervened militarily against the Atlantic slave trade, but had made few proposals to abolish domestic slavery, and only a small number to abolish the domestic slave trade; and

WHEREAS, Representative John Quincy Adams had made such a proposal in 1839, but there were no new proposals until December 14, 1863, when a bill to support an amendment to abolish slavery throughout the entire United States was introduced by Representative James Mitchell Ashley; this was soon followed by a similar proposal made by Representative James F. Wilson; and

WHEREAS, Eventually the Congress and the public began to take notice, and a number of additional legislative proposals were brought forward; and

WHEREAS, On January 11, 1864, Senator John B. Henderson submitted a joint resolution for a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery; and

WHEREAS, The Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Lyman Trumbull, became involved in merging different proposals for an amendment; and

WHEREAS, On February 8 of that year, Senator Charles Sumner submitted a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery as well as guarantee equality; as the number of proposals and the extent of their scope began to grow, the Senate Judiciary Committee presented the Senate with an amendment proposal that combined the drafts of Ashley, Wilson and Henderson; and

WHEREAS, While the Senate passed the amendment on April 8, 1864, by a vote of 38 to 6, the House was slower to give its approval;

Representative Ashley was instrumental in its eventual passage; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln took an active role in working for its passage through the House by ensuring the amendment was added to the Republican Party platform for the 1864 presidential election and using his powers adroitly; and

WHEREAS, The House narrowly reached the two-thirds majority needed to pass the bill on January 31, 1865, by a vote of 119 to 56; and

WHEREAS, The Thirteenth Amendment's archival copy bears an apparent Presidential signature, under the usual ones of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, after the words "Approved February 1, 1865"; and

WHEREAS, The Thirteenth Amendment completed the abolition of slavery in the United States, which had begun with President Abraham Lincoln issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863; and

WHEREAS, Some notable accomplishments due to the freedom of slaves include African Americans participating in all aspects of American life including, participating in sports with individuals such as Jackie Robinson, participating in the arts such as Maya Angelou, Sidney Poitier, and Michael Jackson, and participating in the church and activism such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and

WHEREAS, This ultimately led to additional notable achievements in New York including the first African American Court of Appeals Judge in New York, first African American Governor of New York State, the first African American Mayor of New York City, and the first African American leader of a legislative body; and

WHEREAS, The passing of the Thirteenth Amendment has led to many historical firsts throughout this great nation; one of the most recent being the election of the first African American President of the United States, Barack Obama, who was sworn in to serve as our 44th President on January 20, 2009; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to commemorate events of significance in the history and progress of society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 152nd Anniversary of the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment; 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.