

BY: Senator PARKER

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim
May 2017, as Huntington's Disease 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 illnesses that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2017, as Huntington's Disease Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Huntington's Disease Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Huntington's disease (HD) is a fatal genetic disorder that causes the progressive breakdown of nerve cells in the brain; it deteriorates a person's physical and mental abilities during their prime working years and has no cure; and

WHEREAS, HD is known as the quintessential family disease because every child of a parent with HD has a 50/50 chance of carrying the faulty gene; and

WHEREAS, Today, there are approximately 30,000 symptomatic Americans and more than 200,000 at risk of inheriting the disease; and

WHEREAS, Born in 1912, Woody Guthrie was an American singer-songwriter who died of HD; soon after his death, his widow, Marjorie, vowed to do something about this silent killer; dynamic and compelling, she convinced then President Jimmy Carter to form a Presidential Commission to study neurological diseases, including HD; and

WHEREAS, The recommendations that resulted from that 1977 report have served as the cornerstone of the Huntington's Disease Society of America's (HDSA) commitment to the care and cure of HD; and

WHEREAS, HDSA maintains Centers of Excellence across the country including one in Rochester, New York; at these world-class facilities, patients benefit from expert neurologists, psychiatrists, therapists, counselors and other professionals who have deep experience working with families affected by HD and who work collaboratively to help families plan the best HD care program throughout the course of the disease; and

WHEREAS, In 1993, researchers identified the gene that causes HD; since then, research has moved quickly towards developing treatments and, ultimately, a cure; since 1999, the HDSA has committed more than \$18 million to fund research with the goal of finding effective treatments to slow Huntington's disease; and

WHEREAS, Past research efforts have also helped increase the number of scientists working on HD and have shed light on many of the complex biological mechanisms involved in HD; and

WHEREAS, The Team Hope Walk program is HDSA's signature grassroots fundraising campaign designed to provide hope and support for those touched by this devastating disease; and

WHEREAS, All proceeds support HDSA's mission to improve the lives of people affected by HD and their families; since their inception in 2007, Team Hope Walks have occurred in over 100 different cities and have raised over \$7 million for the cause; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater public awareness of Huntington's disease and more must be done to increase activity at the local, state and national levels to support those afflicted as well as their families and caregivers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2017, as Huntington's Disease Awareness Month in the State of New York; 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.