

BY: Senator PARKER

COMMEMORATING the 120th Anniversary of the
destruction of Ellis Island by fire on Wednesday,
June 14, 2017

WHEREAS, From 1892 to 1954 over 12 million immigrants entered the United States through Ellis Island, a small island in New York Harbor, within the shadows of the Statue of Liberty; only five years after its 1892 opening, the Ellis Island Immigration Station burned to the ground; it was not until December 17, 1900, that the new Main Building was opened, receiving 2,251 immigrants on that day alone; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body celebrates the importance of Ellis Island in the State of New York and in New York City as a first step for those who were to become New Americans; in doing so, we, as citizens of this great State and this Nation, acknowledge the role of Ellis Island in realizing the dreams of millions who came to America to pursue the ideals of our founders; and

WHEREAS, Prior to 1890, the individual states regulated immigration into the United States; the first large wave of eight million immigrants entered New York from 1850 to 1890, primarily from Northern and Western Europe, many through Castle Garden on Ellis Island, part of a system of harbor fortifications; and

WHEREAS, It became apparent that the facility was ill-equipped to deal with the huge influx of immigrants, so the federal government constructed a new federally-operated immigration station on Ellis Island; the fire that ensued burned the buildings to the ground, destroying immigration records dating to 1855; thereafter, all future structures had to be fireproof; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is committed to ensuring that the citizens of New York State understand, remain dedicated to, and are protected by the principles of government under the law that was the impetus for the emigration of twenty million European immigrants, and untold numbers of other immigrants from the entire world since then; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 120th Anniversary of the destruction of Ellis Island by fire that destroyed what was to become the very symbol of the American Dream, now a part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, and to recognize the 117th Anniversary of the reopening of this historical island; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.