

BY: Senator PERALTA

HONORING Jorge Munoz Zapata upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, From time to time this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Jorge Munoz Zapata upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Born on March 23, 1964, Jorge Munoz Zapata is a Colombian American philanthropist and politician; for the last several years, he has cooked, packed and given free, hot meals to hungry people every day under a subway stop;

WHEREAS, After the death of his father, Jorge Munoz Zapata followed his mother to New York to find work to support the family; he obtained a legal residency in 1987, and later became a citizen; today, he works as a school bus driver; and

WHEREAS, Jorge Munoz Zapata established An Angel in Queens Foundation, a non-profit organization which delivers free home-cooked meals in Queens, New York; between 2004-2009, the Foundation served more than 70,000 meals to hungry people; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable man began his mission to feed the hungry when he realized large amounts of food were thrown away at some stores and restaurants; initially, he collected food from local businesses and handed out meals to underprivileged people three nights a week; and

WHEREAS, Eventually, Jorge Munoz Zapata's mother, sister, and some friends joined him in this noble endeavor, and subsequently, the group have been delivering food and drinks to underprivileged people on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, When Jorge Munoz Zapata's truck pulls up, the hungry people who rely on him for sustenance, brighten with joy and relief as they gratefully accept their home cooked meals; and

WHEREAS, A truly compassionate and generous man, Jorge Munoz Zapata invests a large part of his salary to support his philanthropic activities; this remarkable Angel truly understands that we all have a stake in on another; by giving of his time, energy and resources to feeding the hungry, he has demonstrated the enduring American values of sacrifice and kindness; and

WHEREAS, For his steadfast and unremitting commitment to his community, Jorge Munoz Zapata was the recipient of numerous awards and accolades including the Order of the Congress of Colombia in the Degree of Knight by the Senate of Colombia, and the Presidential Citizens Medal by President Barack Obama, the second highest civilian honor in the United States; he was also named a 2009 CNN Hero; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his generous charity work, Jorge Munoz Zapata was a two-time candidate of the Independent Movement of Absolute Renovation to the Chamber of Representatives of Colombia, and was appointed temporary Congressman from September-December of 2015; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Jorge Munoz Zapata upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Jorge Munoz Zapata.