

BY: Senator HAMILTON

COMMEMORATING the 39th Anniversary of the
Independence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay just tribute to the cultural heritage of the ethnic groups which comprise and contribute to the richness and diversity of the community of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in keeping with its time-honored traditions, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to commemorate the 39th Anniversary of the Independence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and

WHEREAS, The people of this great State and Nation and St. Vincent and the Grenadines enjoy a deep and abiding relationship rooted in kinship and culture; and

WHEREAS, The island now known as St. Vincent was originally named Hairouna ("The Land of the Blessed") by the native Caribs; the Caribs aggressively prevented European settlement on St. Vincent until 1719; and

WHEREAS, Prior to this, formerly enslaved Africans, who had either been shipwrecked or who had escaped from Barbados, Saint Lucia and Grenada and sought refuge in mainland St. Vincent, intermarried with the Caribs and became known as Garifuna or Black Caribs; and

WHEREAS, St. Vincent has a French and British colonial history and is now part of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, CARICOM, and the Commonwealth of Nations; from 1763 until its independence in 1979, St. Vincent and the Grenadines passed through various stages of colonial status under the British; and

WHEREAS, A representative assembly was authorized in 1776, a Crown Colony government was installed in 1877, a legislative council was created in 1925, and universal adult suffrage was granted in 1951; and

WHEREAS, During the period of its control of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the British made several unsuccessful attempts to affiliate the island with other Windward Islands; this would have simplified Britain's control over the region through a unified administration; and

WHEREAS, In the 1960s, several regional islands under British control, including St. Vincent, also made an independent attempt to unify, and this unification was to be called the West Indies Federation; this was driven by a desire to gain freedom from British rule, but the attempt collapsed in 1962; and

WHEREAS, St. Vincent was granted "associate statehood" status by Britain on October 27, 1969; this gave it complete control over its

internal affairs, but was short of full independence; and

WHEREAS, On October 27, 1979, following a referendum under Milton Cato, St. Vincent and the Grenadines became the last of the Windward Islands to gain its independence; it came on the 10th anniversary of St. Vincent's associate statehood status; and

WHEREAS, The 39th Anniversary of St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Independence provides an opportunity to recognize the significance of its contributions to the quality and character of life, and, through events and activities, for all people to gain a greater appreciation of its history and traditions, and of the role it has played, and will continue to play, in our society; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to recognize such events of significance which foster ethnic pride and exemplify the cultural diversity that represents and strengthens the fabric of the people and the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 39th Anniversary of the Independence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.