

BY: Senator RITCHIE

HONORING Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood 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 all of us; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood 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, On May 16, 2017, Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood responded to a call of a boat in distress at the Oneida River Dam located in Caughdenoy, in which two males were trapped onboard, one of them being a paraplegic; and

WHEREAS, When he reached the waterway, Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood observed the boat taking on water, as it was caught in the current and pinned in one of the floodgate channels; and

WHEREAS, Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood, upon arriving on the scene, sprang into action, jumping a fence surrounding the structure, climbing down the steel supports on the side of the dam and jumping onboard, thinking he could level the boat with his weight; and

WHEREAS, While on the boat, Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood crawled under the flood channel to the east side of the dam, however, once the boat passed through the channel, the current was still too strong to pull it to shore; and

WHEREAS, The boat, which did not have any paddles onboard and had damaged primary and trolling motors, continued to take on water, drifting uncontrollably down the river; at the same time, the boat's passengers had been exposed to near-freezing water temperatures for 30 minutes; and

WHEREAS, At this point, Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood discovered a strap on board, tied it to a cleat on the bow and dove into the river; while trying to swim to shore, he ran out of line, struggling to reach land despite the heavy weight of the craft and the strength of the current; and

WHEREAS, Eventually, the boat passed under another bridge and Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood was able to find a calm, shallow spot near a bridge abutment where he could finally stand up; and

WHEREAS, Upon reaching shore, members of the Caughdenoy Volunteer Fire Department, along with Oswego County Sheriff's Deputy Phillip Illardi helped pull the boat with the two males on board safely to shore; and

WHEREAS, Individuals such as Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood, are devoted to protecting others, going above and beyond and putting their own well-being on the line to protect those who they serve; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood 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 Trooper Aaron C. Eastwood.