

BY: Senator VALESKY

HONORING Brigitte Hale upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the 2016 Parent Advocate Award by the New York State Association Of Foreign Language Teachers

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge and honor those dedicated and talented individuals within our midst, who have and continue to inspire their communities through their tireless efforts and their outstanding professional and personal accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Brigitte Hale upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the 2016 Parent Advocate Award by the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT) at its 99th Annual Conference in October of 2016 at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool, New York; and

WHEREAS, The NYSAFLT Parent Advocate Award was created in 2015 to honor a dedicated parent advocate of world language learning; Brigitte Hale was nominated for the award by Fayetteville-Manlius High School educators Richard Ernst, Denise Mahns and Kate Stewart who cited her efforts in helping to save the German program at the Fayetteville-Manlius Central School District; and

WHEREAS, The German program at the Fayetteville-Manlius School District has been in existence for over 40 years, but in the Spring of 2011, this treasured part of the curriculum was threatened when many school districts were confronted with the necessity to trim budgets; and

WHEREAS, Students in eighth grade who had signed up for German were told that the enrollment was too low and they would have to choose another language class, but Brigitte Hale, a parent and graduate of Fayetteville-Manlius High School herself, was determined to save the program and used a variety of methods to make the district understand the importance of German classes to students and the community; and

WHEREAS, One such method was a letter-writing campaign which included letters to the local newspapers, as well as a letter with more than 50 signatures that was sent to the School's Superintendent and Board of Education; Brigitte Hale, along with other concerned parents, also utilized social media to raise awareness; and

WHEREAS, The Fayetteville-Manlius German advocates additionally went to multiple school board meetings with students and spoke passionately at open forums about why German should be kept at Fayetteville-Manlius; Brigitte Hale also arranged for one-on-one meetings with the Superintendent to personally discuss why German was the choice for her and her children and why the language had to stay at the school; and

WHEREAS, The most significant aspect of Brigitte Hale's campaign was a feature on the local news in which she and other parents were interviewed about the elimination of German - a language of commerce, economic power and high relevance in the global economy; and

WHEREAS, Brigitte Hale herself is a proud descendent of German Americans; her parents arrived in 1963 at the New York Harbor via the Hanseatic, bringing with them nothing but two wooden crates and a couple hundred dollars; and

WHEREAS, It was very important to Brigitte Hale to ensure that her daughters and future Fayetteville-Manlius students would be able to access as many foreign language classes as possible as part of a worldly curriculum; and

WHEREAS, As a solution, the School Board decided to offer a single eighth-grade German course at Wellwood Middle School, and allowed students at Eagle Hill Middle School, where enrollment was smaller, to video-conference in the class; and

WHEREAS, Since then, German enrollments at Fayetteville-Manlius have increased with the addition of classes in seventh and eighth grades and at the high school; currently, the district offers six classes at the middle school level and five high school classes; and

WHEREAS, Brigitte Hale has continued to support the German program by attending her daughters' recognition assemblies for National German Exam Awards, attending the German American Society of Central New York Scholarship Night, being involved in the Syracuse Oktoberfest, and attending National German Honor Society inductions; and

WHEREAS, Brigitte Hale's energy and enthusiasm helped to save the German program at the Fayetteville-Manlius School District; and

WHEREAS, For these and many other reasons, Brigitte Hale stands as a positive role model within her community due to her tireless efforts to inspire others and create positive change; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and having contributed to the growth and excellence of this great Empire State, Brigitte Hale, in every capacity, has left a permanent mark on the Fayetteville-Manlius Central School District and her community; she will be known as a determined, innovative and genuinely concerned individual; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Brigitte Hale upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the 2016 Parent Advocate Award by the New York State Association Of Foreign Language Teachers; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Brigitte Hale.