

BY: M. of A. Brabenec

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim
October 2017, as Czech-American Heritage Month in
the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom 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 sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2017, as Czech-American Heritage Month in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Augustine Herman was the first documented Czech (Bohemian) settler in North America; while working for the West India Company, he came to New Amsterdam, now known as New York; and

WHEREAS, A man of many talents, Augustine Herman became one of the most influential people in the Dutch Province which led to his appointment to the Council of Nine to advise the New Amsterdam Governor Peter Stuyvesant; one of his greatest achievements was his celebrated map of Maryland and Virginia commissioned by Lord Baltimore; and

WHEREAS, There was another Bohemian living in New Amsterdam at that time, Frederick Philipse, who became equally famous; he was a successful merchant who, eventually, became the wealthiest person in the entire Dutch Province; and

WHEREAS, In 1735, the first significant wave of Czech colonists, the Moravian Brethren, began arriving on the American shores; they were the followers of the teachings of the Czech religious reformer and martyr Jan Hus and Bishop John Amos Comenius; and

WHEREAS, The Moravian Brethren first settled in Savannah, Georgia, and then in Pennsylvania, from which they spread to other states after the American Revolution, especially Ohio; they established a number of Moravian settlements, such as Bethlehem and Lititz in Pennsylvania and Salem in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, The Moravians made great contributions to the growth and development of the United States culture, most notably in music; the trumpets and horns used by the Moravians in Georgia are the first evidence of Moravian instrumental music in America; and

WHEREAS, In 1776, at the time of the Declaration of Independence, more than two thousand Moravian Brethren lived in the colonies; the Moravian Brethren established a close relationship with President Thomas Jefferson, who designated special lands to the missionaries to civilize the Indians and promote Christianity; and

WHEREAS, The free uncultivated land in America encouraged immigration throughout the nineteenth century; most of the immigrants were farmers and settled in the Midwestern states; immigration reached a peak in 1907, when 13,554 Catholic Czechs entered the eastern ports; and

WHEREAS, By 1910, the Czech population was 349,000, and by 1940 it was 1,764,000; today, 1,615,000 Czech-Americans live in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Czech-Americans have made significant contributions to American society as doctors, politicians, musicians, athletes, and teachers; and

WHEREAS, Czech-American, Madeleine Albright was the first woman to hold the office of United States Secretary of State; and

WHEREAS, Another noteworthy Czech-American is Thomas Robert Cech, a Chemist who was the recipient of the 1989 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the discovery of the catalytic properties of RNA; and

WHEREAS, Czech-American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the aspirations and values that have been shared with the Czech people for generations, and to recognize the countless contributions of Americans and New Yorkers of Czech descent to every aspect of society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2017, as Czech-American Heritage Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.