

Assembly Resolution No. 801

BY: M. of A. Dinowitz

COMMENDING Reality Check of New York State for its role in engaging youth as leaders in the movement against tobacco use and the tobacco industry, and paying tribute to this year's honorees

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and applaud the efforts of those organizations within the State of New York which aim to curb the use of tobacco by young people in their community; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Reality Check of New York State for its role in engaging youth as leaders in the movement against tobacco use and the tobacco industry, and to pay tribute to this year's honorees; and

WHEREAS, Since 2001, Reality Check, the youth action component of the New York State Bureau of Tobacco Control Program, has strived to educate their peers, parents, legislators, community members and key decision makers on the tobacco industry's manipulative marketing practices and how they target youth to become replacement smokers; and

WHEREAS, The exceptional teenagers of Reality Check were instrumental in removing tobacco ads from certain magazines sent to schools and read by youth, and convincing numerous parks and other outdoor spaces to adopt smoke-free policies within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the group is working with national leaders and other states to remove smoking scenes from youth rated films, and to eliminate the influence the tobacco industry has in retail stores; and

WHEREAS, Through Reality Check, teenagers have used their powerful voices to send a clear message about the hazards of tobacco use and marketing at numerous press events, meetings with legislators, town hall meetings, city council meetings, school board meetings and parent group meetings; and

WHEREAS, These remarkable young people have spread their important message about the dangers of smoking at national conferences, and rallies throughout the State of New York and neighboring states; some individuals have also traveled abroad to convey their heartfelt wishes for a world that will be safer and healthier for everyone; and

WHEREAS, The average age of a new smoker is 13 years-old; smoking directly causes \$10.39 billion in annual health care costs in New York; and

WHEREAS, Currently, 14.2% of adults and 4.3% of high school students smoke in New York State; 20.6% of high school students use electronic cigarettes; and

WHEREAS, Tobacco kills more people annually than alcohol and illegal drug use, car accidents, homicide and HIV/AIDS combined; and

WHEREAS, Each year, 28,200 New Yorkers die from smoking related diseases, and 280,000 children currently under the age of 18 will prematurely die from smoking; and

WHEREAS, Twelve young people from across the state have proudly spoken from their hearts and have donated their time and energy to telling the truth about the risks and costs related to tobacco; they truly deserve to be recognized as a 2018 New York State Reality Check Youth Advocate of the Year; and

WHEREAS, They include: Lauren Cybul, senior at Pittsford Southerland High School, New York State Youth Advocate; Ryan Minard, senior at Wallkill Senior High School, MARO Region Youth Advocate; Zoe Kaminski, junior at Depew High School, Western Region Youth Advocate; Jacob Brady, senior at Johnson City Senior High, Central Region Youth Advocate; and Mikhail Hailu, senior at Schuylerville Central School, Capital Region Youth Advocate; and

WHEREAS, The following teenagers were named Honorable Mention Youth Advocates: Heather Chatt, sophomore at Lockport High School; Heidi Chatt, sophomore at Lockport High School; Nicholas Doxey, sophomore at Lockport High School; Keonna Browne, senior at Binghamton High School; Kelsey Gibbons, senior at Cortland Junior/Senior High School; and Kathryn Wojsiat, sophomore at Holy Cross Academy; as well as Isaac Snitkoff, senior at Susan E. Wagner High School; and

WHEREAS, These tremendous students have remained steadfast in their commitment to educate their peers, parents, legislators, community members and key decision makers on the tobacco industry's marketing practices and its efforts to target youth; and

WHEREAS, These 12 individuals diligently worked to control tobacco use, by using their knowledge, problem solving skills and voices to educate their community about the real consequences of cigarette smoking; and

WHEREAS, Organizations such as Reality Check of New York State are proactively committed to protecting the lives of our young people; and

WHEREAS, It is with great admiration that this Legislative Body applauds the efforts of all the individuals involved in this vital organization which continues to proactively work for the health, safety and future of our great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Reality Check of New York State for its role in engaging youth as leaders in the movement against tobacco use and the tobacco industry, and to pay tribute to this year's honorees; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be

transmitted to Reality Check of New York State, and the aforementioned honorees.