

BY: Senator MAYER

COMMENDING the Albanian-American community in New York State upon the occasion of the Annual Parade and Annual Independence Day Celebrations

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the quality and character of life in this great Empire State is indelibly enriched by immigrant-American communities that work hard to contribute to community life; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Albanian-American community in New York State upon the occasion of the Annual Parade and Annual Independence Day Celebrations; and

WHEREAS, The first Albanian documented to have emigrated to the United States was Kole Kristofori, who landed in Boston in the early 1880s and is remembered as the pioneer of the Albanian ethnic group in the U.S.; it was not until the 1900s that a large number of Albanians reached the U.S. East Coast; and

WHEREAS, After World War II the Albanians who emigrated to the U.S. were mostly political emigrants; in the 1990s, many Albanians from Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, and the Republic of Macedonia emigrated to the United States as refugees of war; and

WHEREAS, As of 2012, there were over 60,000 Albanian-Americans in New York, the largest Albanian community in the United States, and

WHEREAS, The most prominent communities of Albanian-Americans in New York are in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Westchester, and Yonkers; and

WHEREAS, Many Albanian-Americans experienced severe political or ethnic persecution before moving to America, and they are extremely grateful for the freedoms afforded to all in America; and

WHEREAS, The Albanian-American community in New York immigrated to the United States for a better life for themselves, their children, and the generations after them; and

WHEREAS, They have a strong entrepreneurial spirit and manage some of the most successful restaurants in our communities focusing on Albanian or Italian-American cuisine; Albanian cuisine is also rising in prominence and popularity with Albanian bakeries selling burek, fli, and tollumba; and

WHEREAS, Albanian-Americans also have a notable stake in New York's real estate market, managing substantial properties throughout the tri-state area; and

WHEREAS, Many Albanian-Americans immigrated to the United States for better educational opportunities for themselves and their children, and have thrived in New York; and

WHEREAS, Albanian-Americans can be found serving New York communities as police officers, nurses, teachers, lawyers, doctors, financiers, and other notable professions; and

WHEREAS, Many Albanian-Americans have become involved in New York's civic life, with the most notable Albanian-American politician serving on the New York City Council, Mark Gjonaj, representing the 13th City Council district; before serving on the New York City Council, Mr. Gjonaj served as a New York State Assembly Member for the 80th District from 2012 to 2017; prior to that, Mr. Gjonaj was the Bronx Commissioner of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission; and

WHEREAS, Albanian-American New Yorkers are also leaving their mark on the arts; pop artist Bleta "Bebe" Rexha was born in Brooklyn, New York, to Albanian parents and was nominated for two Grammy Awards in 2019; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, Albanian-American Yonkers resident Florinda Kajtazi won the Miss New York USA 2019 competition and she represented the State of New York at the 68th Miss USA pageant; and

WHEREAS, Every year, the Albanian-American community hosts an Albanian parade in New York City to celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of the Albanian-American community in New York; and

WHEREAS, The Albanian-American community also hosts an annual celebration in New York of the Albanian Independence Day on November 28, 1912; and

WHEREAS, Many Albanian-Americans also recognize and hold annual celebrations for the Kosova declaration of independence from Serbia on July 2, 1990; and

WHEREAS, The strength of our great Empire State is boosted by notable diverse communities from every part of the world, and this Legislative Body is pleased to take a moment to recognize the Albanian-American community in New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Albanian-American community in New York State upon the occasion of the Annual Parade and Annual Independence Day Celebrations; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to representatives of the Albanian-American community throughout the State of New York.