

Senate Resolution No. 2118

BY: Senator HARCKHAM

COMMENDING five Police Officers upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those distinguished officers and citizens who would devote themselves to public service, demonstrating great courage and diligence in providing for the care and welfare of the citizens of their communities and this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Within every community of the State of New York there are certain individuals who, by virtue of their commitment and dedication, command the respect and admiration of their community for their exemplary contributions and service on behalf of others; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend five Police Officers upon the occasion of their designation as recipients 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 April 12, 2019, the Pleasantville Police Department received a report of a man standing on the edge of the Manville Road overpass that crosses over the Saw Mill River Parkway; officers were dispatched to the location and mutual aid was requested; and

WHEREAS, Officers from the Mount Pleasant Police Department and the Westchester County Department of Public Safety responded to assist with traffic control, as well as provide assistance with speaking to the emotionally disturbed subject on the bridge; and

WHEREAS, Once on the scene, Sergeant Juan Garcia (Pleasantville Police Department) positioned himself on the southbound Saw Mill River Parkway to coordinate the traffic control and deployment of lifesaving equipment with the County Police; and

WHEREAS, Police Officer Erin Holly (Pleasantville Police Department), Detective Rob Barber (Westchester County Department of Public Safety), and Detective Lauren Valentino and Sergeant Walter O'Keefe (Mount Pleasant Police Department) began speaking to the subject on the bridge, a 19 year-old resident of Pleasantville in crisis; and

WHEREAS, As the officers spoke to the young man, they used verbal de-escalation tactics to calm him down and build trust before patiently

and carefully moving closer to him, constantly utilizing their training and assessing the situation; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of approximately 30 minutes, the officers positioned themselves close enough to the subject to secure him and remove him from danger; he was then transported to the Westchester County Medical Behavioral Health Unit for evaluation; and

WHEREAS, Justly recognized as heroes, these five brave officers richly merit the admiration of this Legislative Body for their consummate, swift action in saving the life of a young man; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those dedicated public servants who unselfishly devote their lives to the preservation of order and the protection of others are worthy and due full praise for their commitment and noble endeavors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend five Police Officers upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Sergeant Juan Garcia, Police Officer Erin Holly, Detective Rob Barber, Detective Lauren Valentino and Sergeant Walter O'Keeffe.