

BY: Senator RIVERA

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2019, as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months dedicated to raising awareness of serious illnesses impacting the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew Cuomo to proclaim October 2019, as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Spina Bifida Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Spina bifida, which occurs when the spine of the baby fails to close and a lesion on the spinal column is created, is the most common permanently disabling birth defect in the United States; an average of eight babies every day are born with spina bifida or a similar defect of the brain and spine; and

WHEREAS, Spina bifida happens during the first month of pregnancy when the spinal column and brain, or neural tube, is formed; the openings, or lesions, in the spinal column end up causing damage in the spinal column and result in some degree of paralysis; and

WHEREAS, There are many New Yorkers living with spina bifida for whom health and support services are critical to their well-being and improving their quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Children born with spina bifida have medical expenditures that are 13 times greater than those of the average child without spina bifida; adults with spina bifida have average medical expenditures that are three to six times greater than those of adults without spina bifida; and

WHEREAS, The average total lifetime cost to society for many infants born with spina bifida may well exceed one million dollars; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that taking folic acid decreases the risk for neural tube defects during pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 55% of all pregnancies in New York State are unplanned; folic acid education can help women of child-bearing age understand the benefits of taking a daily multivitamin to avoid these birth defects; and

WHEREAS, Experts recommend that all women of child-bearing age in the United States who are capable of becoming pregnant should consume 400 micrograms of folic acid per day for the purpose of reducing their risk of having a pregnancy affected with spina bifida; and

WHEREAS, The prevalence of spina bifida among children from birth to 11 years of age declined by 1.4% annually from 1991 to 2002, with a consistent reduction each year due to folic acid fortification of the food supply; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York to raise awareness regarding the challenges of living with spina bifida and the steps that can be taken to prevent spina bifida; it is the hope that this month of awareness will also remind all New Yorkers that people with spina bifida are not defined by their condition, they are people with careers, families, and children, just like so many people without spina bifida; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew Cuomo to proclaim October 2019, as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York; and the Spina Bifida Association of Northeastern New York.