

BY: Senator LIU

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim
October 9, 2020, as Hangul Day (Korean Alphabet Day)
in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities 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 M. Cuomo to proclaim October 9, 2020, as Hangul Day (Korean Alphabet Day) in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Hangul Day in South Korea; and

WHEREAS, Hangul Day is a national Korean commemorative day marking the invention and the proclamation of Hangul by the 15th Century Korean monarch Sejong the Great; and

WHEREAS, Hangul Day was declared as a national holiday in South Korea in 2013; the holiday is called Hangul Proclamation Day, or Hangul Day for short, and commemorates the promulgation of the Hunmin Jeongeum; and

WHEREAS, Before the creation of Hangul, people in Korea, known as Joseon at the time, primarily wrote using classical Chinese alongside the native phonetic writing systems that predated Hangul by hundreds of years, including Idu, Hyangchal, Gugyeol, and Gakpil; and

WHEREAS, However, due to the fundamental differences between the Korean and Chinese languages, and the large number of characters needed to be learned, there was much difficulty in learning how to write using Chinese characters for the lower classes, who often did not have the privilege of an education; and

WHEREAS, To assuage this problem, King Sejong created this unique alphabet to promote literacy among the common people; according to the Sejong Sillok, King Sejong proclaimed publication of Hunmin Jeongeum, the document introducing the newly created alphabet which was also originally called by the same name, in the ninth month of the lunar calendar in 1446; and

WHEREAS, In 1926, the Korean Language Society, whose goal was to preserve the Korean language during a time of rapid forced Japanization, celebrated the octo-sexagesimal (480th) anniversary of the declaration of Hangul on the last day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar, which is on November 4th of the Gregorian calendar; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Society declared it the first observance of

Gagyanal; the name came from Gagyageul, an early colloquial name for Hangul, based on a mnemonic recitation beginning गया geogyeo; the name of the commemorative day was changed to Hangullal in 1928, soon after the term Hangul, coined originally in 1913 by Ju Si-gyeong, became widely accepted as the new name for the alphabet; and

WHEREAS, The day was then celebrated according to the lunar calendar; in 1931, the celebration of the day was switched to October 29th of the Gregorian Calendar, the calendar which is in contemporary use; and

WHEREAS, Three years later, the date was moved to October 28th, to coordinate the date with that of the Julian Calendar, which had been in use during the 15th Century when King Sejong made his proclamation; and

WHEREAS, The discovery in 1940 of an original copy of the Hunmin Jeongeum Haerye, a volume of commentary to the Hunmin Jeongeum that appeared not long after the document it commented upon, revealed the Hunmin Jeongeum was announced during the first 10 days of the ninth month; and

WHEREAS, The 10th day of the ninth month of the 1446 lunar calendar was equivalent to October 9th of that same year's Julian calendar; the South Korean government, established in 1945, declared October 9th to be Hangul Day, a yearly legal holiday which excused government employees from work; and

WHEREAS, Major employers pressured the South Korean government to increase the country's annual number of work days; in 1991, to balance out the adoption of the United Nations Day, it vacated Hangul Day's status as a holiday; by law, Hangul Day remained a national commemoration day, and the Hangul Society campaigned for the holiday's restoration; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, in celebration of the 563rd Anniversary of the invention of the Korean alphabet by King Sejong, a 6.2-meter high, 20-ton bronze statue of King Sejong the Great of Joseon at Gwanghwamun Plaza in Seoul, was unveiled to the public; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when methods of communication, such as Hangul, are created and brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 9, 2020, as Hangul Day (Korean Alphabet Day) 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.