

BY: Senator RATH

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize the historic, economic, and cultural value of this organization which substantially contributes to the vitality and well-being of its communities and the entire Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site; this milestone year-long anniversary celebration will begin on September 14, 2021, 50 years from the day when the historic house museum first opened its doors to the public; and

WHEREAS, Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States, was one of the country's most consequential leaders and the youngest person to ever hold the office; and

WHEREAS, Theodore Roosevelt devoted his life of public service to his native New York State, serving three terms in the New York State Assembly (1881-1883), Police Commissioner of New York City (1895-1897), and Governor (1898-1900); and

WHEREAS, In addition to his renowned Presidency, Theodore Roosevelt served his country as Civil Service Commissioner (1889-1895), Assistant Secretary of the Navy (1897-1898), leader of the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry (Rough Riders-1898), and Vice-President (1901); and

WHEREAS, This astonishingly complex, multi-faceted individual was not only a committed, tireless public servant who transformed the nation into a world power and the presidency into a force with which to be reckoned, but also a devoted family man, a conservationist, a civil rights activist, an advocate for social justice, a naturalist, and an historian; and

WHEREAS, The principal purpose of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is to preserve and protect the location of Theodore Roosevelt's 1901 presidential inauguration for this and future generations, and to interpret the significance and relevance of Roosevelt's presidency and his enduring legacy for more than 30,000 people annually through on-site visitation and virtual outreach; and

WHEREAS, The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, located at 641 Delaware Avenue in the City of Buffalo and the County of Erie, is both a local and national landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places; it is one of only four places in America where the presidential oath of office has been administered outside the nation's capital, and Western New York's only unit of the U.S. Department of the Interior's 423-unit National Park Service; and

WHEREAS, The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site stands as a reminder to all of a hallmark of our American democratic process: the peaceful transfer of political power during a time of national crisis; and

WHEREAS, Following a period of uncertainty in the early 1960s regarding the former Wilcox Mansion's future and a subsequent community-wide drive to save and restore the building, the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is widely viewed as one of the earliest local examples in the modern historic preservation movement; and

WHEREAS, The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation, a corporation organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New York and chartered by the State's Education Department, has successfully managed the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site since its designation as a National Historic Site by Congress in 1966, and is responsible for all aspects of site management today, including finance, personnel, maintenance, interpretation and planning; and

WHEREAS, The successful operation of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is possible because of the strong relationship and strategic public/private partnership forged between the Foundation and the NPS, bringing together NPS expertise, guidance and support as well as the local knowledge, dedication and resources from the Foundation to provide the public with a professionally managed, unique, and engaging National Historic Site; and

WHEREAS, Since the opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site's Visitor Center in 2009, it has re-imagined the visitor experience, incorporating multi-media and interactive exhibits, bringing the site's tour to life, more than doubling its number of visitors, and is now a heritage tourism destination which helps to fuel the region's economic development; and

WHEREAS, Those visitors, from across the region and country and throughout the world, are now immersed in the Pan-American Exposition, the assassination of President William McKinley, and the circumstances surrounding Roosevelt's inauguration, as well as an exploration of the complex issues with which the new president grappled and which are no less relevant to citizens of today than they were 120 years ago, including: immigration and urban poverty, race and social inequities, environmental conservation, free enterprise and organized labor, and the U.S. role in global affairs; and

WHEREAS, The steady growth the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site has experienced since its transformation is a tribute to the vigilant stewardship of the Foundation's board of trustees; the unwavering commitment of the site's corps of volunteers; and the extraordinary generosity of the public and private sectors in Buffalo, Erie County, and Western New York; Albany; and Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body that when institutions of such noble aims and accomplishments are 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 commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site.