

BY: Senator REICHLIN-MELNICK

MOURNING the death of Dream Shepherd, the
inspiration behind New York State's Dream's Law

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is deeply moved to inscribe upon its records this remembrance for Dream Shepherd, a young woman of incredible perseverance whose fortitude and optimism were greater than any personal hardship she faced; and

WHEREAS, Dream Shepherd of Ossining, New York, died on Saturday, August 21, 2021, at the age of 16 after a battle with sickle cell anemia which developed into osteosarcoma; and

WHEREAS, Even though she passed away at a young age, Dream Shepherd truly changed the world as the driving force behind the passing of Dream's Law, which ensures thousands of New Yorkers who require a central venous line will have proper access to a home healthcare service upon discharge from the hospital; and

WHEREAS, Dream's Law was motivated by the struggle Dream Shepherd's family faced following her 2014 release from the hospital after a transplant of stem cells from her mother Diana Lemon to treat her sickle cell anemia; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately, the insurance company declined a request for nursing support to manage Dream Shepherd's central venous line, which goes into the patient's heart; her mother did not have a medical background or resources to hire an aide on her own, and was left in charge of the central venous line which was a daunting task; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, Dream Shepherd and her mother met with New York State Senator David Carlucci at the Capitol in Albany, New York, to advocate for Dream's Law; the bill was later sponsored by Assemblywoman Sandra Galef and was signed into law by then Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in 2019, and was expanded to cover others whose medical conditions demanded more post-hospital care than their families could provide on their own; and

WHEREAS, Dream Shepherd and her mother were also instrumental in raising awareness for the Shepherd Patterson Law, which ensures parents of minor children with serious medical conditions were made aware of educational accommodations; and

WHEREAS, Dream Shepherd was born to make a difference; she joined the Girl Scouts as a kindergartener, and throughout her short but inspired life, she truly lived by its motto, be prepared to help out wherever she is needed; and

WHEREAS, Even though she had a disease, this compassionate, proud young woman lived a life full of joy and adventure; through the Garden of Dreams Foundation, she sang at Radio City Music Hall and the Beacon

Theater with the O.A.R. 2.0 chorus; and

WHEREAS, When she was 14 years-old, Dream Shepherd was featured in a special about transplant recipients hosted by Robin Roberts of "Good Morning America," and for her steadfast and unremitting commitment to helping others, she was named a New York State Woman of Distinction in 2015; and

WHEREAS, New Yorkers will forever be indebted to Dream Shepherd, who tirelessly worked to make life a little bit easier for those dealing with serious medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, Dream Shepherd's infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through her family's vivid and happy memories; her insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives she touched; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Dream Shepherd leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all she served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Dream Shepherd, and to express its deepest condolences to her family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Dream Shepherd.