

BY: Senator RIVERA

COMMEMORATING the 75th Anniversary of the United
Spinal Association

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality of life in the communities across this great State of New York is enriched by the concerned and dedicated efforts of those organizations of distinction whose singular purpose is the care and welfare of others; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Spinal Association; and

WHEREAS, Located in the City of New York, the United Spinal Association is a leading national advocacy organization and service provider for people with spinal cord injuries and neurological disorders, their loved ones, care providers, and personal support networks; and

WHEREAS, The United Spinal Association was founded in 1946, by a group of returning servicemen and women from World War II, to address the needs of paralyzed veterans; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, members of this organization advocated for and secured the first accessible housing bill in the United States, Public Law 80-702, which provided federal funds for the building of accessible homes for paralyzed veterans; and

WHEREAS, Two decades later, members diligently worked to pass the Architectural Barriers Act, which guarantees equal access to federally-funded buildings and facilities for wheelchair users and all Americans with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, In 1970, James J. Peters, who would later lead United Spinal Association, exposed the deplorable conditions paralyzed Vietnam War veterans faced at the Bronx Veterans Administration Hospital with an article in **LIFE** magazine, leading the Veterans Administration to establish a national spinal cord injury service office to address the needs of paralyzed veterans and the renovation of the Bronx hospital, which was later named for him; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, New York City settled a lawsuit initiated by United Spinal Association, agreeing to make all city buses, key subway stations and commuter rail stations, and all new transit stations accessible to wheelchair users, and established a paratransit system for people unable to use mass transit, leading to a model which would be incorporated as part of the transportation provisions of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act; and

WHEREAS, Regardless of a person's level of abilities, the United

Spinal Association seeks to build an inclusive world which removes barriers, particularly for wheelchair users, which embraces the talents of all people with disabilities to achieve their full potential and provides people with disabilities equal opportunities to pursue their interests and dreams; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the last 75 years, the United Spinal Association has supported more than two million Americans living with spinal cord injuries or neurological disorders through proven programs and services, nurturing innovative self-reliance, advocacy and leadership; empowering its members, their loved ones, care providers and stakeholders with resources, one-on-one assistance, and peer support; promoting independence through employment opportunities and inclusion into mainstream society; and advocating for greater disability rights, including access to healthcare, rehabilitation, mobility equipment, transportation, community services and the built environment; and

WHEREAS, Through the legacy of James J. Peters, who once described the straightforward strategy in advocating for Americans with disabilities as simply refusing to accept no for an answer, is alive and well throughout the entire United Spinal Association; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when associations 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 75th Anniversary of the United Spinal Association; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the United Spinal Association.