

BY: Senator KAPLAN

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 2021, as Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official weeks that are set aside to increase awareness of serious health conditions that affect 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 M. Cuomo to proclaim July 2021, as Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month; and

WHEREAS, When we share what makes us unique with others, the world becomes a better, more interesting place; Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month is about celebrating differences, not only in how we look and sound, but also in the experiences that make us who we are; and

WHEREAS, National Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month was established by AmeriFace and cleftAdvocate; and

WHEREAS, Cleft and craniofacial conditions affect thousands of infants, children, teens and adults in the United States each year; some are born with congenital anomalies like cleft lip and palate, others with more complex, life-threatening craniofacial conditions; some are burned; others are injured in accidents and animal attacks or diagnosed with various oral/head/neck and skin diseases; and

WHEREAS, Every year in the United States, approximately 7,000 babies (or 1 out of every 600) are born with a cleft lip and/or a cleft palate; these are two of the most common birth defects found in the United States; and

WHEREAS, A cleft lip occurs when the lip does not completely form, leaving an opening in the lip; the opening can range from a small notch to a large opening from the lip up through the nose; and

WHEREAS, A cleft palate occurs when the roof of the mouth (palate) does not completely close, leaving an opening that can extend into the nasal cavity; cleft lip and cleft palate may occur together or on their own; and

WHEREAS, The causes of orofacial clefts are unknown; genetics may play a factor in some cases as well as exposure to certain risk factors that arise during a woman's pregnancy; prenatal factors known to increase the chance of having an orofacial cleft include: smoking,

diabetes, or the use of certain medications such as anti-epileptic medications like topiramate or valproic acid; and

WHEREAS, Children with orofacial clefts often have an impaired ability to feed and an impaired language development; babies need special bottles and nipples to feed successfully, as well as feeding in an upright position; and

WHEREAS, Surgery to repair these clefts usually occurs within the first 12-18 months of life; surgical repair is not just to improve the appearance of the child's face but may also improve breathing, hearing, and speech and language development; and

WHEREAS, Children may also need other types of treatment such as special dental and orthodontic care or speech therapy; with proper treatment, most children with orofacial clefts continue to experience healthy lives; and

WHEREAS, While they are the most common, cleft lip and cleft palate are only two of many craniofacial birth defects; these defects may occur alone or in combination as part of a craniofacial syndrome; some other anomalies include: craniosynostosis- the skull of an infant fuses too early, causing problems with brain and skull growth; anotia/microtia- the external ear is missing or small and not formed properly; anophthalmia/microphthalmia- one or both eyes are missing or small and not fully developed; hemifacial microsomia- the tissues on one side of the face are underdeveloped; micrognathia- the jaw is undersized; and positional plagiocephaly- the head is misshapen and asymmetrical; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater awareness of this serious health condition, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, State and National levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 2021, as Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month; 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.