

BY: M. of A. Barrett

COMMEMORATING the 103rd Anniversary of The
American Legion

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize veterans' organizations which have positively impacted and substantially contributed to the vitality of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 103rd Anniversary of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a veteran's organization founded in Paris on March 15, 1919, by three officers of the American Expeditionary Forces, who fought in World War I; and

WHEREAS, On May 8, 1919, the St. Louis Caucus was held to organize the soldiers and sailors in every state to become members of this new organization known as The American Legion; about 97 delegates from New York State organized the Department of New York while at the St. Louis Caucus; and

WHEREAS, On May 24, 1919, the national organization issued the Department of New York American Legion its charter, recognizing New York's founding roots to both Paris and St. Louis Caucus; and

WHEREAS, The Department of New York issued its first Post charter on June 2, 1919, and exactly two months later, issued a charter for its 200th post; and

WHEREAS, On September 16, 1919, the United States Congress chartered The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, Nine New Yorkers were among some 20 founders at the organizational meeting in Paris on February 15-16, 1919, which set the stage for the Paris Caucus (March 15-17) and the St. Louis Caucus (May 8-19); they included Theodore Roosevelt Jr., the son of the 26th United States President; and

WHEREAS, The focus of The American Legion is on securing services and benefits for veterans, the families of service members, and the communities where the veterans live and work; and

WHEREAS, Among the programs The American Legion sponsor include baseball teams, Boys State, Legion Riders, Operation Comfort Warriors, National Emergency Fund, and Oratorical Contest for students under the age of 20; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has departments in all 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico and the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, Starting in the late 1930s, The American Legion was instrumental in prodding the federal government to create the United States Veterans' Bureau, which later became the Veterans Administration, and in 1989, the Department of Veterans Affairs, a cabinet level department to give veterans representation at the highest level of government; and

WHEREAS, In 1944, The American Legion was the moving force behind the drafting and enacting of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, which is commonly known as the GI Bill; and

WHEREAS, This landmark legislation provided for low-cost mortgages, low-interest loans to start a business, cash payments to attend high school, college or vocational/technical school and one year of unemployment compensation; and

WHEREAS, Since World War II, The American Legion has been in the fore-front of supporting additional veterans benefits including in the 1950s mental health treatment which led to the National Association of Mental Health, and in the 1980s the Legion sponsored and funded studies assessing the effects of Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion created the American Legion Scholarship Fund for children of military members killed in active duty on or after September 11, 2001 and in 2016, the scholarship criteria were amended to include the children of veterans with 50 percent or greater disability ratings granted from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, In August 2018, The American Legion began its centennial recognition at the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the site of the first American Legion National Convention; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Department of New York State celebrated its 100th Annual Department Convention July 19-21, 2018, in Rochester, New York; and

WHEREAS, It is with great pleasure that this Legislative Body acknowledges this important milestone in the history of The American Legion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 103rd Anniversary of The American Legion; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The American Legion Department of New York Commander Francis A. LaMarsh and Department of New York Adjutant James W. Casey.