

BY: Senator ASHBY

COMMENDING Retired Army Sergeant Major Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Retired Army Sergeant Major Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, In addition to this most prestigious honor, Sergeant Major Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., received the Reverend Francis A. Kelley Society Medal of Freedom in recognition of his selection as the Rensselaer County Hometown Hero on Friday, October 27, 2023, at the Melvin Roads American Legion Post No. 1231, East Greenbush, New York; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from Lansingburgh High School, Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., enlisted in the United States Army in 1981; while stationed at Fort Gordon in Georgia, he graduated from Advanced Individual Training as a wire systems installer; and

WHEREAS, Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., went on to serve with the 56th Field Artillery Brigade, a Pershing missile unit in West Germany, for two years; he fulfilled a subsequent two-year appointment with the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood in Texas before returning to Germany where he served with the 3rd Infantry Division; and

WHEREAS, After completing his active-duty service, Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., joined the New York Army National Guard in 1990; he served with the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, in Troy, New York, where he attained the rank of Sergeant, and was commissioned to join a unit of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, 27th Infantry Brigade, a round out brigade of the 10th Mountain Division; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, Sergeant Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., was reassigned to the 42nd Infantry Division in Troy, serving with his unit at World Trade Center Ground Zero after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001; he had the essential task of coordinating and solving communication equipment problems; and

WHEREAS, Subsequently, Sergeant Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., was deployed to Forward Operating Base in Tirik, Iraq, serving with Task Force Liberty in the Sunni Triangle; in support of more than 23,000 troops, he assisted the 250th Signal and 17th Signal battalions with the operation and maintenance of tactical and commercial communications systems; and

WHEREAS, Returning from his deployment, newly appointed Sergeant Major Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., was the senior enlisted communications advisor to the state Adjutant General at the Joint Forces Headquarters in Latham, New York, until his retirement in 2009; additionally, he obtained an associate degree from University of Maryland and graduated from Sergeant Major Academy; and

WHEREAS, For his exemplary and commendable service to this Nation, Sergeant Major Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., was awarded numerous honors, including medals for Meritorious Service, Army Commendation, Good Conduct, and Humanitarian Service, a Bronze Star, and decorations of honor exclusive to New York State; and

WHEREAS, As a civilian, Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., became a Sheriff's Deputy for Rensselaer County, later appointed to the office of Undersheriff; he also served as Vice President of the Troy Division, as well as District Director of the New York State Ancient Order of Hibernians; and

WHEREAS, Remaining active in his community, Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., was a coach for the local Miss Softball and Pop Warner teams; he completed two terms as a member of the board of the Troy City School District; and

WHEREAS, Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., is recognized within his community for his involvement through his law enforcement experience, leadership, and membership in numerous committees, associations, and organizations that focus attention on veterans of the United States Armed Services; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., has demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended, and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and dedication to their communities, their State, and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Retired Army Sergeant Major Paul J. Higgitt, Jr., upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be

transmitted to Retired Army Sergeant Major Paul J. Higgitt, Jr.