

BY: Senator WEBB

COMMEMORATING the 100th Annual New York & Bermuda
Lions Convention, May 3-5, 2024

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those renowned organizations of high purpose and worthy accomplishment whose endeavors have faithfully served the welfare of the citizens of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Annual New York & Bermuda MD-20 Lions Convention, May 3-5, 2024, at the Double Tree Hotel in Binghamton, New York; and

WHEREAS, The International Association of Lions Clubs began as the dream of Chicago businessman Melvin Jones; he believed that local business clubs should expand their horizons from purely professional concerns to the betterment of their communities and the world at large; and

WHEREAS, After contacting similar groups around the United States, an organizational meeting was held on June 7, 1917 in Chicago, Illinois; the new group took the name of one of the invited groups, the "Association of Lions Clubs"; and

WHEREAS, Just three years after its formation, the association became international when the first club in Canada was established in 1920; major international expansion continued as clubs were established, particularly throughout Europe, Asia and Africa during the 1950s and 60s; and

WHEREAS, In 1925, Helen Keller addressed the Lions international convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, challenging Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness"; since this time, Lions clubs have been actively involved in service to the blind and visually impaired; and

WHEREAS, Broadening its international role, Lions Clubs International helped the United Nations form the Non-Governmental Organizations sections in 1945, and continues to hold consultative status with the U.N.; and

WHEREAS, In addition to sight programs, Lions Clubs International is committed to providing services for youth, and also works to improve the environment, build homes for the disabled, support diabetes education, conduct hearing programs and, through their foundation, provide disaster relief around the world; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, Lions Clubs International has grown to include 1.3 million men and women in approximately 45,000 clubs located in 202 countries and geographic areas; and

WHEREAS, The first Lions Club in New York State was the Herald Square Lions Club formed late in 1917; the oldest existing club in New York is the Rochester Lions Club chartered in 1921; New York was originally a part of a large District which included New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland; and

WHEREAS, In 1922, New York State split from the other states to become District 20, and the first New York State Convention was held in 1925; since then, as membership continued to grow, the State was divided into sub-districts beginning with four in 1938-39, and growing to the 11 which exist today; and

WHEREAS, Bermuda became a part of New York State Lions in 1968; New York was chosen because Bermuda could not reach the minimum requirement for a District on their own and the main U.S. port of entry for Bermudians into the United States was New York; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the International initiatives supporting relief and/or cures for sight, hunger, diabetes, childhood cancer and the environment, the Lions of New York State support four major projects: Lions Camp Badger which runs summer camping programs for differently abled individuals aged 12 and up during 6 different summer sessions; Lions SEE (Screening Eyes Early) which is a free vision screening program targeting children from 6 months to 6 years of age and screening for Amblyopia; the Alert Foundation which provides emergency supplies and equipment to communities throughout New York State who fall victim to natural disasters; and the New York State & Bermuda Lions Foundation which raises funds to support various projects in the Lions clubs' communities through grant assistance; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals and organizations 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 100th Annual New York & Bermuda Lions Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Lions Clubs of New York and Bermuda, Inc.