

Senate Resolution No. 2541

BY: Senator STEC

COMMENDING Tanner Varden 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, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend the caring concern and heroic acts of individuals who take prompt and appropriate action in emergency situations, nobly risking their own lives in an effort to preserve the lives of others; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Tanner Varden 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, A 15-year-old sophomore of Saranac Lake High School and the Adirondack Education Center, Tanner Varden, and his stepfather, Glenn Strack, were driving home on Friday, February 16, 2024, when they neared the scene of an accident, evidenced by tire tracks going off the road and a downed sign; Ana Candelli, a senior at Paul Smith's College, slid off the snow-covered roadway during her commute to her job at the Red Cross in Morrisonville; and

WHEREAS, While Ana slowed her car to negotiate a curve in the road, the brakes were not working; she tried to use the emergency brake to no avail; the vehicle flipped after swerving and hitting a pole, becoming wedged between two trees on an embankment; she was able to call 9-1-1 before losing consciousness, suspended upside down by her seatbelt; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable teen shouted for his stepfather to pull over after which he slid down the embankment to reach the stranded victim; at this time, two other people stopped to help; knocking on the window twice without receiving a response, Tanner Varden knew everyone had to act quickly to pry open the door; and

WHEREAS, When Ana Candelli regained consciousness, Tanner Varden asked her the appropriate questions to ascertain whether she had serious injuries, assisted her while she exited the vehicle, and talked with her until the ambulance arrived; he helped a member of the Saranac Lake Volunteer Rescue Squad to apply a neck brace; Ana was later released from the hospital with only a concussion; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 24 hours after the rescue, Tanner Varden and his stepfather were driving home when they observed a woman who was

taking photos of the crash site; stopping to ask whether she knew the young woman involved in the accident, they learned that she is Karen Candelli who will always be grateful to the selfless and courageous young man who saved her daughter's life and prevented a parent's worst nightmare; and

WHEREAS, After graduating high school in 2026, Tanner Varden's goal is to be an emergency medical technician (EMT), emergency department doctor, or registered nurse (RN), focusing on trauma response; a full-time student and part-time employee of McDonald's, he is also an active participant in the Upward Bound program at SUNY Plattsburgh where he prepares himself for a future of opportunity through college preparation activities; and

WHEREAS, Whether he is crunching numbers for an algebra examination, serving smiles with every order, or meeting with Upward Bound, Tanner Varden approaches each day with enthusiasm and determination; passion for helping others and satisfaction in making a positive impact on their lives provide him with the ultimate goal of spreading happiness and making the world a better place one interaction at a time; and

WHEREAS, Tanner Varden, in his spontaneous and heroic act, has so aptly demonstrated his character and compassion for the welfare of others, personifying, by virtue of his action, the collective concern of ordinary citizens across the community of New York State who voluntarily respond without thought of danger or reward when others need help; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Tanner Varden 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 Tanner Varden.