

BY: Senator KENNEDY

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim
March 5-11, 2023, as School Social Work Week in the
State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official weeks that are set aside to inform key audiences about the role and value of school social workers in caring for our most precious resource, our youth; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 5-11, 2023, as School Social Work Week in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National School Social Work Week; and

WHEREAS, The theme for National School Social Work Week 2023 is "We Rise."; School Social Workers rise up - supporting their students, families, and school communities; and

WHEREAS, The importance of school social work through the inclusion of school social work programs and services has been recognized in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.); and

WHEREAS, School social workers serve as vital members of a school's education team, playing a central role in creating partnerships between the home, school, and community to ensure student academic success; and

WHEREAS, School social workers are especially skilled in providing services to students who face serious challenges to school success, including disability, poverty, discrimination, abuse, neglect, mental illness, homelessness, bullying, familial stressors, and other barriers to learning; and

WHEREAS, School social workers are more necessary now than any time in recent memory, as more students are struggling with mental and behavioral health disorders, with nearly one in six children, two to eight years old (17.4%), having a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder; and

WHEREAS, Those who wish to access community mental health services often find them unavailable, inaccessible, or inadequate; and

WHEREAS, School mental health programs are critical to early identification of and early intervention for mental health problems; and

WHEREAS, School social workers, being licensed mental health professionals in our schools, provide necessary assessment, interventions, counseling, family outreach, and community referrals; and

WHEREAS, Fewer than one in five children in need of mental health services actually receive these services, and research indicates that school mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, dropout rates, and discipline referrals, while improving academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of School Social Work Week highlights the vital role school social workers play in the lives of students in New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 5-11, 2023, as School Social Work Week in the State of New York, and to honor and recognize the contributions of school social workers to the success of students in schools across the State, as well as encourage the people of New York State to observe School Social Work Week with appropriate activities that promote awareness of the vital role of school social workers, in schools and in the community helping students prepare for their futures as productive, engaged citizens; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York and to the School Social Work Association of America.