

Assembly Resolution No. 2296

BY: M. of A. Gonzalez-Rojas

MOURNING the death of Cecilia Gentili, successful advocate, talented actress, and cherished community member

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Gentili of Marine Park in Brooklyn, New York, died on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at the age of 52; and

WHEREAS, Born January 31, 1972, in Galvez, Argentina, Cecilia Gentili later migrated to the United States in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Gentili distinguished herself in her profession and by her sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of her community; and

WHEREAS, The life of Cecilia Gentili was marked by an unrelenting dedication to advocacy on behalf of transgender people, sex workers, and the LGBTQIA+ community at large; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Gentili's first job was with the Apicha Community Health Center in Manhattan, where she worked as an HIV peer navigator, and then as the trans health program coordinator, managing a clinic which grew from four patients to more than 500 during her tenure; and

WHEREAS, Growing ever more passionate about her clients' welfare, Cecilia Gentili went on to become the managing director of policy at GMHC, formerly called the Gay Men's Health Crisis, which was dedicated to the prevention of AIDS; and

WHEREAS, Remarkably ambitious and dedicated in service to members of her community, Cecilia Gentili founded Trans Equity Consulting in early 2019, which advises companies on equity issues and serves as an advocate for trans women of color, sex workers, immigrants, and incarcerated people; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Cecilia Gentili was a triumphant lobbyist, with numerous legislative achievements; she lobbied for the passage of the New York State Gender Expression and Discrimination Act, which became law in 2019, and the repeal of the so-called Walking While Trans Ban, which had prohibited loitering for the purpose of prostitution and had disproportionately targeted trans women and women of color; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Gentili was also one of two lead plaintiffs in a successful lawsuit against the federal government which had tried to roll back trans protections enshrined in the Affordable Care Act; at her death, she had been lobbying to decriminalize sex work and helping to

draft legislation that would do so through another of her organizations, DecrimNY; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Gentili was instrumental in the development of two statewide bills to provide survivors of trafficking with record relief and to end the criminalization of loitering - a charge overwhelmingly leveled against transgender women, regardless of their involvement in the sex trade; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Gentili, in a truly cathartic and creative experience, published her first book in 2022, which is a coming-of-age tale structured as letters to her friends, family, and tormentors from her past; and

WHEREAS, In 2023, Cecilia Gentili co-organized Transmissions Fest, the first all-trans music festival in New York City, with proceeds benefiting LGBTQIA+ charities; and

WHEREAS, Among her many endeavors, Cecilia Gentili was the creator and director of two theater productions, Red Ink, and The Knife Cuts Both Ways; the former was a stand-up rendition of stories regarding her search for faith as a trans woman, and the latter being an autobiographical take on one trans woman's queer multicultural experience; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Gentili was also cast in the popular television series, "Pose," about the drag ball culture of the 1980s, which also covered such important topics to which she spent her life advocating and teaching about, such as HIV/AIDS and the adversities which transgender people often experience, as well as highlighted the beautiful moments and experiences which come with being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Gentili's commitment to excellence, and her spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Cecilia Gentili leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all she served, befriended, and impacted; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Cecilia Gentili, successful advocate, talented actress, and cherished community member; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Cecilia Gentili.