

BY: M. of A. Jean-Pierre

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 29, 2023, as Vietnam Veterans Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Vietnam Veterans Day

WHEREAS, It is custom of this Legislative Body that those who give positive definition to the profile and disposition of the American Armed Forces so profoundly strengthen our shared commitment in conjunction to the exercise of freedom; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 29, 2023, as Vietnam Veterans Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Vietnam Veterans Day; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Forces from the State of New York, who have so honorably served this State and Nation deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of the men and women who served with dignity and honor during this historic time-period, let us remember them and thank them for their service; and

WHEREAS, More than three million servicemen and women left their families to bravely serve a world away in places such as La Drang to Khe Sanh from Hue to Saigon, and countless villages in between; they pushed through jungles and rice paddies, heat, and monsoons, fighting to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans; and

WHEREAS, Through more than a decade of combat, over air, land, and sea, these proud Americans upheld the highest traditions of the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam War was fought in the Republic of South Vietnam from 1955 to 1975, and involved North Vietnamese regular forces and Vietnam Cong guerrilla forces in armed conflict with the United States Armed Forces and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, The United States Armed Forces became involved in Vietnam because the United States Government wanted to provide direct military support to the Government of Vietnam to defend itself against the growing Communist threat from North Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Members of the United States Armed Forces began serving in an advisory role to the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam in 1955; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents on August 2nd and 4th, 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (Public Law

88-408) on August 7, 1964, which provided the authority to the President of the United States to prosecute the war against North Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, By the end of 1965, there were 80,000 United States troops in Vietnam, and by 1969, a peak of approximately 543,000 troops was reached; and

WHEREAS, On January 27, 1973, the Treaty of Paris was signed, which required the release of all United States prisoners-of-war held in North Vietnam and the withdrawal of all United States forces in South Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, On May 7, 1975, the last 2,500 troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam, ending military involvement in the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, the New York State Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Albany to commemorate those members of the United States Armed Forces who died or were declared missing-in-action in Vietnam, the first state in the nation to dedicate a Vietnam Memorial; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 90 of the Laws of 2008, designated March 29 of each year as Vietnam Veteran's Day in the State of New York, a day of commemoration to honor those individuals who sacrificed for their country; and

WHEREAS, Beginning on Memorial Day 2012, the federal government began a partnership with local governments, private organizations, and communities across the country to participate in the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, a 13-year program to honor and give thanks to a generation of proud Americans who saw a country through one of the most challenging times; and

WHEREAS, May 28, 2012, through November 11, 2025, is known as the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War as declared by President Barack Obama, by Presidential Proclamation dated May 25, 2012; and

WHEREAS, March 28, 2017, President Donald Trump signed the Vietnam War Recognition Act of 2017; the measure amended Title 4 of the United States Code to encourage the flying of the American Flag on National Vietnam War Veterans Day every year on March 29th; and

WHEREAS, The Blue Water Navy (BWN) Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-23) was signed by President Trump on June 25, 2019, and took effect on January 1, 2020; this measure extended the presumption of herbicide exposure, such as Agent Orange, to veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Public Law 116-283 signed on January 1, 2021, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's, Bladder cancer, and Hypothyroidism, will be deemed service-connected and eligible for health care and compensation; and

WHEREAS, President Joe Biden signed the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act on August 10, 2022, (Public Law No. 117-168) that expanded the VA healthcare benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of this great State and Nation, benefactors of the sacrifices and courageous acts of the men and women who served and continue to serve in the United States Armed Forces, remain indebted and are justly proud of the Vietnam veterans from the State of New York, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 29, 2023, as Vietnam Veterans Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Vietnam Veterans Day; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause further to encourage the people of the State of New York to observe Vietnam Veterans Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that provide the appreciation Vietnam War veterans deserve but did not receive upon returning home from the war; to demonstrate the resolve that never again shall the Nation disregard and denigrate a generation of veterans; to promote awareness of the faithful service and contributions of such veterans during their military service as well as their communities since returning home; to promote awareness of all the importance of entire communities empowering veterans and the families of veterans to readjust to civilian life after military service; and to promote opportunities for such veterans to assist younger veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in rehabilitation from wounds, both seen and unseen, and to support the reintegration of younger veterans into civilian life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of the Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; Ned Foote, President of the Vietnam Veterans of American New York State Council; and Joseph Pollicino, President of Tri County Council Vietnam Era Veterans.