

BY: M. of A. Angelino

COMMEMORATING the 40th Anniversary of the Southern Tier Independence Center of Binghamton, New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of the Legislative Body to recognize those established organizations within our communities that, year after year, diligently work to improve the quality of life for its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Southern Tier Independence Center of Binghamton, New York; and

WHEREAS, Co-founded by Maria Dibble and Frank Pennisi, Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC) is an independent living center serving children and adults with all types of disabilities and promotes the independence, integration and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life including employment, recreation, housing, education, volunteering, and civil responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, STIC also provides support, consultation, training and services to families, businesses, agencies and others in its community; and

WHEREAS, The current Executive Director and totally blind from birth, Maria Dibble has experienced the discrimination and false assumptions that people make when meeting a person with a disability, underestimating what they can do, or even completely dismissing it; nevertheless, she was integrated into regular schools as a child, and is a graduate of Binghamton University, and she understands the issues faced by children and their families; and

WHEREAS, STIC has grown from its humble beginnings with a grant of \$100,000 and four employees to a budget of \$17 million and about 750 employees, all dedicated to the independence of people with disabilities, and advocating for their civil and economic rights; and

WHEREAS, For her steadfast and unrelenting commitment to STIC and those with disabilities, Maria Dibble was inducted into the NYS Disability Rights Hall of Fame in 2019 and was the recipient of the David Veatch Advocacy Award from the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL); and

WHEREAS, In addition, STIC's cofounder and retired Disability Rights and Accessibility Director Frank Pennisi, and its current Advocacy Director Susan Ruff were also awarded the David Veatch Advocacy Award from NYAIL for their relentless advocacy even on seemingly hopeless issues; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, STIC has supported many issues and legislation including the ADA, Consumer Directed Personal Assistance

Program, the development of the Traumatic Brain Injury and Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Waivers, election reform, and polling place accessibility; and

WHEREAS, The success of STIC is in direct correlation to the efforts of its staff whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the institution and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when 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 40th Anniversary of the Southern Tier Independence Center of Binghamton, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Maria Dibble, Executive Director, Southern Tier Independence Center.