

BY: M. of A. Weprin

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim
March 15, 2024, as Stiff Person Syndrome Awareness
Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness of serious illnesses that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; 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 15, 2024, as Stiff Person Syndrome Awareness Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of International Stiff Person Syndrome Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS, Stiff Person Syndrome (SPS) is a disorder that causes stiffness when the muscles in the body contract and spasm involuntarily; individuals affected by this disorder cannot control or predict the movement of their bodies; and

WHEREAS, Stiff Person Syndrome is characterized by these persistent or intermittent muscle contractions or spasms, causing abnormal, often repetitive, movements, postures, or both; the movements are usually patterned and twisting and may resemble a tremor; and

WHEREAS, These spasms can occur in episodes, particularly when a person with SPS is surprised or startled, moves suddenly, or experiences cold temperatures or emotional stress; in some individuals, the spasms are induced by certain exercises or touch; and

WHEREAS, Symptoms may affect a specific part of the body or many parts simultaneously; at times, these manifestations may be painful; and

WHEREAS, The cause of Stiff Person Syndrome is unknown; researchers believe it results from antibodies blocking the glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD) enzyme which aids in manufacturing the gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) neurotransmitter; GABA reduces or blocks certain nerve signals, and without the proper amount, the nervous system becomes hyperexcitable; and

WHEREAS, In North America, Stiff Person Syndrome is a rare neurological disorder, affecting approximately one to two individuals per one million; this disorder does not discriminate, affecting men, women, and children of all ages and backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, There is no cure for Stiff Person Syndrome; working with a specialist and maintaining symptom control with therapies and medications can make it easier to live with the condition; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater public awareness of

this serious health issue, and more must be done to increase research at the local, state, and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 15, 2024, as Stiff Person Syndrome Awareness Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.