

Senate Resolution No. 1609

BY: Senator PARKER

COMMENDING In Our Own Voices, Inc. in recognition of its outstanding service and advocacy on behalf of Black and Latine LGBTQ+ communities during Black History Month 2026

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those distinguished organizations whose work advances equity, dignity, health, and opportunity for historically marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend In Our Own Voices, Inc. (IOOV), a leading community-based organization whose advocacy and services uplift Black and Latine Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people of color throughout the Capital Region and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Founded upon the principles of justice, empowerment, and cultural affirmation, In Our Own Voices has established itself as a vital resource and trusted safe space for individuals navigating the intersecting challenges of race, sexuality, gender identity, health disparities, and economic inequities; and

WHEREAS, Guided by its mission to ensure the physical, mental, spiritual, political, cultural, and economic survival and growth of LGBTQ+ people of color, IOOV delivers culturally competent programs and life-affirming services that strengthen individuals, families, and communities; and

WHEREAS, Through comprehensive programming such as housing assistance, healthcare navigation, mental health support, HIV/AIDS prevention and education, workforce development, youth empowerment, and community wellness initiatives, IOOV addresses critical gaps in service while advancing holistic well-being; and

WHEREAS, The organization further amplifies community pride and visibility through signature events such as its annual BIPOC Pride Festival and Unity Through Diversity programming, creating affirming spaces that celebrate identity, heritage, and collective resilience; and

WHEREAS, Under the distinguished leadership of Board President Rhonda Daniel, Chief Executive Officer Tandra R. LaGrone, and Chief Operating Officer Phillip A. Burse, along with a dedicated board, staff, and network of community partners, In Our Own Voices continues to expand its reach and deepen its impact across New York State; and

WHEREAS, During Black History Month, it is especially fitting to recognize organizations such as In Our Own Voices whose work embodies the ongoing struggle for civil rights, social justice, and self-determination within Black and Latinx communities; and

WHEREAS, By advocating for equitable housing, accessible healthcare, cultural competency, and public policy reform, IOOV continues to play a transformative role in advancing health equity and social progress throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, The leadership, staff, volunteers, and supporters of In Our Own Voices exemplify courage, compassion, and unwavering commitment to uplifting those too often underserved and unheard; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend In Our Own Voices, Inc. for its outstanding contributions to community empowerment, public health, advocacy, and cultural affirmation, and to recognize the organization's enduring impact during the observance of Black History Month 2026; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the leadership of In Our Own Voices, Inc., as an expression of this Legislative Body's highest esteem and sincere appreciation.