

**BY:** Senator RHOADS

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim  
May 17, 2026, as Necrotizing Enterocolitis 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 health issues that affect the lives of families in the State of New York; 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 Friday, May 17, 2026, as Necrotizing Enterocolitis Awareness Day in the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) is the most common cause of death in hospitalized premature infants after two weeks of age; and

**WHEREAS,** Babies born prematurely or with a medical complication like congenital heart disease are most at risk of NEC; and

**WHEREAS,** Thousands of babies develop NEC each year and hundreds of babies die from this complex intestinal condition; and

**WHEREAS,** Necrotizing enterocolitis causes a severe inflammatory process that can lead to intestinal tissue damage and death; once NEC is diagnosed, many babies only live for a few hours or days; and

**WHEREAS,** Surgery for NEC is not curative, and the babies who survive often have lifelong neurological and nutritional complications; and

**WHEREAS,** Necrotizing enterocolitis results in approximately \$5,000,000,000 dollars of hospitalization expenses per year and roughly 19 percent of neonatal healthcare expenditures in the United States, with an estimated cost of \$200,000 or more for each case of surgical necrotizing enterocolitis; and

**WHEREAS,** Breast milk is one of the most effective ways to help prevent necrotizing enterocolitis in medically fragile infants, and when the mother's milk is unavailable, pasteurized donor human milk is the next-safest option for babies at risk of NEC; and

**WHEREAS,** Formula does not protect against the risk of NEC in medically fragile infants, and infants at risk of NEC receive the most protection from their mother's own milk and pasteurized donor milk; and

**WHEREAS,** Although the risk of necrotizing enterocolitis cannot be fully eliminated and there are not yet sure ways to stop or cure NEC, preventative measures are effective at reducing risks; and

**WHEREAS,** Parents must be trusted and valued as the most important member of their baby's care team, and healthcare providers should

partner with families to provide the best care for infants at risk of NEC; and

**WHEREAS**, This illness affects citizens across this State and Nation; Stephanie Ruidiaz is one such resident living in Bellmore, New York; she has been a champion for Necrotizing enterocolitis after experiencing firsthand the severity of this condition and after facing a devastating loss herself; and

**WHEREAS**, She serves on the Board of Directors for the NEC Society, a nonprofit organization which works to eliminate the disease, pouring every ounce of herself into raising awareness of this necessary cause; and

**WHEREAS**, Necrotizing enterocolitis can develop in both premature babies and babies born at term and more data is desperately needed to better understand how and why NEC occurs in preterm and term infants; and

**WHEREAS**, Disparities and variation in care lead to Black infants being disproportionately affected by, and dying from, necrotizing enterocolitis compared to white infants; and

**WHEREAS**, The NEC Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded and led by a bereaved mother from California whose son died from complications of NEC, and the NEC Society is the world's leading charity working to accelerate NEC research, education, and advocacy; and

**WHEREAS**, To build a world without necrotizing enterocolitis and improve outcomes for infants and families, we must bring New Yorkers together to raise awareness about this devastating neonatal disease; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 17, 2026, as Necrotizing Enterocolitis Awareness Day in the State of New York; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, and the NEC Society.