Senate Resolution No. 20

BY: Senator HINCHEY

COMMENDING Private Leonard Cesternino posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Private Leonard Cesternino posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate, to be celebrated at the Columbia County Honor a Veteran Ceremony on Monday, November 25, 2024, at the Columbia County office building in Hudson, New York; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Leonard Cesternino was born on November 18, 1923, to Anthony and Jenny (Giavonni Giffo) Cesternino in Hudson, New York; and

WHEREAS, Growing up in Hudson, Leonard Cesternino attended Hudson High School where he played basketball and softball and was recognized as a fine athlete; after graduating in 1941, he worked for Mohawk Novelty Plant in Hudson; and

WHEREAS, Leonard Cesternino proudly enlisted in the United States Army on February 12, 1943; and

WHEREAS, After completing basic training, Leonard Cesternino received additional training as an artilleryman at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; he was assigned to A battery, 125th Field Artillery Battalion, 34th Infantry Division in the European Theater of Operation and was involved in continual action in North Africa and Italy; and

WHEREAS, The 125th Field Artillery Battalion distinguished itself during World War II, firing over 250,000 rounds of artillery ammunition in 480 days of combat which was more than any other battalion; and

WHEREAS, On November 29, 1943, while engaged with the enemy north of the Volturno River near Scapoli, Italy, Private Leonard Cesternino was one of two killed along with 19 others who were wounded as a result of a heavy concentration of enemy artillery fire which disabled two guns and started the ammunition pits on fire; and

WHEREAS, Private Leonard Cesternino's remains were interred in the

Allied Cemetery in Carano, Italy, before being reinterred in Cedar Park Cemetery in Hudson, New York, with full military honors two years later; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of his valiant service, Private Leonard Cesternino was awarded the Purple Heart, WWII Vicory Medal, EAME Medal, the Good Conduct Medal; he left behind his mother, father and 10 brothers and sisters; he was 20 years old; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this great State must never forget the courage with which these men and women served their country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than that owed to those who gave their lives for their beloved Nation; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Private Leonard Cesternino demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Private Leonard Cesternino posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Private Leonard Cesternino.