Senate Resolution No. 348

BY: Senator PARKER

HONORING Jennifer Jones Austin upon the occasion of her recognition at The Positive Community Media's 6th Annual Great American Emancipation Day Awards Celebration on February 22, 2025

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend extraordinary individuals whose leadership, advocacy, and service have profoundly advanced social justice, equity, and empowerment in our communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Jennifer Jones Austin upon the occasion of her recognition at The Positive Community Media's 6th Annual Great American Emancipation Day Awards Celebration on Saturday, February 22, 2025; and

WHEREAS, A fourth-generation leader of faith and social justice, Jennifer Jones Austin has dedicated her career to fighting for equity, dismantling systemic racism, and advancing policies which uplift disenfranchised and marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, As CEO of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA), a leading anti-poverty, policy, and advocacy organization, Jennifer Jones Austin has spearheaded monumental changes in social policy, strengthening protections and opportunities for vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, A lifelong advocate for racial and economic justice, Jennifer Jones Austin has served at the highest levels of public service, holding the titles of Senior Vice President of United Way of New York City, Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Administration for Children's Services, and Civil Rights Deputy Bureau Chief of the New York State Attorney General's Office, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the advancement of equity and justice; and

WHEREAS, In her role as Chairperson of the New York City Racial Justice Commission, the first municipal body of its kind in the Nation, Jennifer Jones Austin led groundbreaking efforts to develop ballot proposals to revise the City's charter, dismantle structural racism in governmental functions, and ensure long-term equity for Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Jones Austin has chaired and served on numerous influential boards and commissions, including the New York City Board of Correction, where she led efforts to end solitary confinement, the New York State Supermarket Commission, the Brooklyn District Attorney's Justice 2020 Initiative, and the New York Police Department Reform and Reinvention Collaborative, among many others; and

WHEREAS, A respected voice on public policy, faith-based advocacy,

and media, Jennifer Jones Austin co-hosts WBLS' "Open Line," as a frequent guest host on Rev. Al Sharpton's nationally syndicated radio program, and regularly contributes to "Brooklyn Savvy" and the "Karen Hunter Show"; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Jones Austin is also a celebrated author, scholar, and thought leader, sharing her powerful journey of faith, resilience, and justice through her books, including "Consider It Pure Joy," and her serving as Scholar in Residence at Alliance University (formerly Nyack College), the Alliance Theological Seminary, and the AU Center for Racial Reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, A dedicated wife and mother, Jennifer Jones Austin has a legacy of compassion, justice, and transformational leadership which continues to inspire future generations of advocates and changemakers; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper that this Legislative Body recognize the extraordinary contributions of Jennifer Jones Austin and commend her for her unwavering dedication to equity, justice, and faith-driven leadership; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Jennifer Jones Austin upon the occasion of her recognition at The Positive Community Media's 6th Annual Great American Emancipation Day Awards Celebration; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Jennifer Jones Austin.