Assembly Resolution No. 585

BY: M. of A. Jones

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 25, 2025, as Missing Children's Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, The State of New York takes great pride in recognizing official days that highlight critical issues affecting its citizens, especially its children, the most vulnerable members of our society; and

WHEREAS, May 25th has been nationally recognized as National Missing Children's Day since 1983 and internationally recognized as International Missing Children's Day since 2001; and

WHEREAS, National Missing Children's Day was established in honor of Etan Patz, a six-year-old boy who vanished on his way to school from a New York City street in 1979, becoming one of the first children to be profiled on milk cartons and a symbol of the missing children's movement in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) was founded as a result of national concern over missing children and has since become the leading organization supporting efforts to find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation, and prevent child victimization; and

WHEREAS, In 2023 alone, NCMEC received 28,886 reports of missing children across the United States, with 3,580 cases remaining active as of the date of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York accounted for 3,008 missing child cases reported to NCMEC in 2023, of which 210 remain active, underscoring the critical nature of this issue within our own state; and

WHEREAS, Nearly one in five children who ran from child welfare care in 2023 were later found to be victims of sex trafficking, demonstrating the severe risks that missing children often face; and

WHEREAS, NCMEC's CyberTipline, a national reporting platform for suspected online child sexual exploitation, received over 36.2 million reports in 2023 alone-a 12% increase over the previous year, highlighting a surge in internet-based crimes against children; and

WHEREAS, Between 2021 and 2023, online enticement reports grew by more than 300%, showing the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's online safety and exploitation risks; and

WHEREAS, Among these millions of reports, NCMEC identified 63,892 urgent cases involving children in imminent danger and referred them to law enforcement for immediate response, an increase of more than 140% over the past three years in urgent cases; and

WHEREAS, NCMEC also trains child-serving professionals to better respond to cases of missing and exploited children, delivering 42,761 training sessions in 2023 to advance child safety efforts; and

WHEREAS, NCMEC's work includes managing the AMBER Alert system, producing age progression photographs, and operating the National Emergency Child Locator Center to reunite families separated during disasters, in addition to offering critical support services to families and survivors; and

WHEREAS, Through its work, NCMEC remains a beacon of hope and a powerful advocate for children's safety, embodying an unwavering commitment to preventing abduction and exploitation and assisting in the safe recovery of children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 25, 2025, as Missing Children's Day in the State of New York, in recognition of the tireless efforts of advocates, families, law enforcement officers, and organizations like NCMEC that work to protect and recover missing children; 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 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.