Assembly Resolution No. 620

BY: M. of A. Lunsford

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 5-11, 2025, as Banned Books Week in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official weeks that are set aside to celebrate the freedom to read and to draw attention to banned and challenged books; 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 October 5-11, 2025, as Banned Books Week in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Banned Books Week; and

WHEREAS, Banned Books Week is an annual awareness campaign promoted by the American Library Association and Amnesty International, that celebrates the freedom to read, draws attention to banned and challenged books, and highlights persecuted individuals; and

WHEREAS, Held since September of 1982, the United States campaign stresses the importance of ensuring the availability of those unorthodox or unpopular viewpoints to all who wish to read them and the requirement to keep material publicly available so people can develop their own conclusions and opinions; and

WHEREAS, The international campaign notes individuals persecuted because of the writings they produce, circulate or read; and

WHEREAS, Some of the events that occur during Banned Books Week are The Virtual Read-Out and The First Amendment Film Festival; and

WHEREAS, According to a study by PEN America, during the 2022-2023 school year, 3,300 books were banned, a 33% increase from the previous school year; and

WHEREAS, That same study found that the books banned or challenged overwhelmingly featured themes about race and racism or contained LGTBQ characters; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that the citizens of this great Empire State have access to all literature, either controversial or non-controversial, which supports our nation's First Amendment guaranteeing the freedom of expression by prohibiting Congress from restricting the press or the rights of individuals to speak freely; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 5-11, 2025, as Banned Books Week in the State of New York; and

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.