LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the observance of March 12, 2009 as World Glaucoma Day

WHEREAS, In an effort to combat one of the main causes of blindness around the globe, the World Glaucoma Association and the World Glaucoma Patient Organization have set March 12, 2009, as the 2nd Annual World Glaucoma Day, a day to be marked by awareness and educational events organized by eye care institutions and local patient support groups worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the United States; it is the leading cause for African-Americans and strikes residents of developing countries at alarming rates; and

WHEREAS, Known as "the sneak thief of sight," glaucoma is a group of eye diseases characterized by gradual loss of vision; if left untreated glaucoma can result in permanent vision loss and may lead to blindness; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that 4.5 million people around the world are blind due to glaucoma and that this number will more than double by 2020; and

WHEREAS, Early detection is the key to treating and halting the effects of glaucoma yet current worldwide estimates reveal that more than half of glaucoma sufferers do not even realize they have the disease; and

WHEREAS, Simple detection measures, including regular eye examinations, can help prevent the serious complications which can arise from untreated glaucoma; and

WHEREAS, Because glaucoma strikes so silently and gradually, it is crucial to educate people about the value of early detection; and

WHEREAS, Organized by Co-Founder Robert Ritch, M.D., Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology at New York Medical College and Shelley and Steven Einhorn Distinguished Chair in Ophthalmology, and Chief of Glaucoma Services at The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, who is also the founder of the World Glaucoma Association and the World Glaucoma Patient Association, the observance of World Glaucoma Day is intended to increase global awareness through local educational and public awareness events; newspaper, radio and television coverage; public glaucoma screenings and open door days at glaucoma clinics and departments of ophthalmology; and

WHEREAS, The encouragement of such events throughout the year coupled with the collective strength of patient support groups, medical professionals, and glaucoma institutions across New York State and around the world can help countless individuals avoid the preventable vision loss which results from this all too prevalent disease; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations, in keeping with the great pride it takes in recognizing official days established to increase awareness of serious illnesses which affect the lives of many New Yorkers, to commemorate the observance of March 12, 2009 as World Glaucoma Day in New York State and across the globe; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Dr. Robert Ritch of The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, the World Glaucoma Association, and the World Glaucoma Patient Association.