LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the observance of Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day on March 30, 2012

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have so honorably served this State and Nation, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, Every citizen of this great State and country is indebted to those brave men and women whose courage, selflessness and great sacrifice symbolize the dedication of a Nation committed to the democratic freedoms enjoyed by the people of our State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam War was fought in the Republic of South Vietnam from 1961 to 1975, and involved North Vietnamese regular forces and Viet Cong guerrilla forces in armed conflict with United States Armed Forces and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, The United States Armed Forces became involved in Vietnam because the United States Government wanted to provide direct military support to the Government of South Vietnam to defend itself against the growing Communist threat from North Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Members of the United States Armed Forces began serving in an advisory role to the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam in 1961; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents on August 2 and 4, 1964, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (Public Law 88-408), on August 7, 1964, which provided the authority to the President of the United States to prosecute the war against North Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, United States Armed Forces ground combat units arrived in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, By the end of 1965, there were 80,000 United States troops in Vietnam, and by 1969, a peak of approximately 543,000 troops was reached; and

WHEREAS, On January 27, 1973, the Treaty of Paris was signed, which required the release of all United States prisoners-of-war held in North Vietnam and the withdrawal of all United States Armed Forces from South Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, On March 30, 1973, the United States Armed Forces completed the withdrawal of combat units and combat support units from South Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, More than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces lost their lives in Vietnam and more than 300,000 members of the Armed Forces were wounded; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, the New York State Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Albany to commemorate those members of the United States Armed Forces who died or were declared missing-in-action in Vietnam, the first such state effort in the Nation; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam War was an extremely divisive issue among the people of the United States and a conflict that caused a generation of veterans to wait too long for the United States public to acknowledge and honor the efforts and services of such veterans; and

WHEREAS, Members of the United States Armed Forces who served bravely and faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War were often wrongly criticized for the policy decisions made by four presidential administrations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The observance of Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day on March 30, 2012, is an appropriate way to honor those members of the United States Armed Forces who served in South Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of this great State and Nation, benefactors of
the sacrifices and courageous acts of the men and women who defended their freedoms and privileges under a democratic government, remain indebted and are justly proud of Vietnam Veterans of America and its members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to pay tribute to the bravery, patriotism and sacrifice made by the men, women, both those still living and those who died in service of our great country in the United States Armed Forces in Vietnam during war and during peace; and to most proudly commemorate the 39th Anniversary of the withdrawal of combat units and combat support units from South Vietnam by observing Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day on March 30, 2012; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause further to encourage the people of this great State to observe Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that provide the appreciation Vietnam War veterans deserve, but did not receive upon returning home from the war; demonstrate the resolve that never again shall the Nation disregard and denigrate a generation of veterans; to promote awareness of the faithful service and contributions of such veterans during their military service as well as to their communities since returning home; to promote awareness of the importance of entire communities empowering veterans and the families of veterans to readjust to civilian life after military service; and to promote opportunities for such veterans to assist younger veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in rehabilitation from wounds, both seen and unseen, and to support the reintegration of younger veterans into civilian life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America; Nancy Switzer, President of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America; Charles "Charlie" Montgomery, Chair of the Vietnam Veterans of America Conference of State Council Presidents; Ned Foote, President of the New York State Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America; and William Kraus, Acting Director of the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs.