

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Chen Guangcheng upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Champion of Free Speech Award by the Visual Artists Guild and Confucius Plaza

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Chen Guangcheng upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Champion of Free Speech Award by the Visual Artists Guild and Confucius Plaza on Saturday, June 1, 2013; and

WHEREAS, This fine event will take place at the New York Annual Tian-anmen Commemoration Award Ceremony at the Chatham Square Restaurant in Chinatown, New York City; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, Chen Guangcheng was named one of the Time 100, TIME'S annual list of "100 men and women whose power, talent or moral example is transforming our world"; the citation stated, "He may have lost his sight as a child, but Chen Guangcheng's legal vision has helped illuminate the plight of thousands of Chinese villagers"; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, Chen Guangcheng was part of the Visual Artists Guild's eight Prisoners of Conscience; rallies and conferences were held to highlight his case and demand justice, and actor Christian Bale accompanied a CNN crew into Chen Guangcheng's hometown to visit him during his house arrest and was beaten; and

WHEREAS, Christian Bale has referred to Chen Guangcheng as a "giant among men"; in April 2012, he escaped from his home and sought refuge from the US State Department; Chen Guangcheng was able to leave China with his wife and two children, and since May 19, 2013, he has resided in New York as a visiting scholar; and

WHEREAS, Chen Guangcheng is the recipient of the Human Rights First's Award, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Prize, and the China Aid Religious Freedom and Rule of Law Defenders Award; he won the Ramon Magsaysay Award while still in detention; he has received Honorary Membership at the New York City Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Chen Guangcheng upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Champion of Free Speech Award by the Visual Artists Guild and Confucius Plaza; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Chen Guangcheng.