

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMENDING Forest Ranger Robert Piersma upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

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, From time to time this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Forest Ranger Robert Piersma of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Forest Protection, upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, On the afternoon of April 10, 2017, Ranger Robert Piersma was notified by a fellow Ranger of several people who capsized their canoe in Chittning Pond on Tassel Hill in Woodford Memorial State Forest; and

WHEREAS, Ranger Robert Piersma arrived on the scene to find two individuals still submerged in Chittning Pond, which had just recently opened up from the winter ice, making water temperatures barely above freezing; and

WHEREAS, Without hesitation or regard for his own safety, Ranger Robert Piersma grabbed his throw-bag and waded out into the lake until the water was nearly chest deep; however, he still could not reach the victims; and

WHEREAS, Ranger Robert Piersma then exited the water and ran back to his patrol vehicle; he quickly donned his cold-water rescue suit, returned to the lake and swam out to the unresponsive subjects who had their arms tightly interlocked; and

WHEREAS, Ranger Robert Piersma grabbed one of the victims' life jackets and swam, pulling both subjects together at once against a stiff headwind; arriving volunteer firefighter rescue personnel assisted this brave Ranger in getting the subjects to shore and ultimately saving

their lives; and

WHEREAS, Ranger Robert Piersma should be regarded as a true hero; he has continually devoted himself to public service, demonstrating great courage and diligence in providing for the care and welfare of the citizens of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Praised for maintaining his composure and his professional conduct, Ranger Robert Piersma demonstrated his true character and genuine compassion for the well-being of others; and

WHEREAS, Within every community of the State of New York there are certain individuals who, by virtue of their commitment and dedication, command the respect and admiration of their community for their exemplary contributions and service on behalf of others; Ranger Robert Piersma is one such individual; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body that those dedicated public servants who unselfishly devote their lives to the preservation of order and the protection of others are worthy and due full praise for their commitment and noble endeavors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Forest Ranger Robert Piersma upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Forest Ranger Robert Piersma.