

BY: Senator O'MARA

COMMENDING the Corning East-West High School Class of 1968 Vietnam Veterans for their many good deeds and great accomplishments

WHEREAS, It is custom of this Legislative Body that those who give positive definition to the profile and disposition of the American Armed Forces so profoundly strengthen our shared commitment to the exercise of freedom; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to commend the Corning East-West High School Class of 1968 Vietnam Veterans for their many good deeds and great accomplishments, to be celebrated at its 50th Class Reunion; and

WHEREAS, During the 1960s and early 1970s, many young American men enlisted or were drafted to fight in the Vietnam War; some chose to join the reserves or the guard; in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C., inscribed with the names of 57,939 members of the United States Armed Forces who had died or were missing as a result of the war; over the following years, additions to the list have brought the total past 58,200; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam War era was a tumultuous period in United States history; many returning soldiers suffered from Agent Orange poisoning and PTSD, and their VA benefits were cut; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam Veterans from the Class of 1968 is a citizen soldier group with conscripted citizens who honor today's troops by enthusiastically welcoming them home from deployment and acknowledging their meritorious service with special recognitions and praise; and

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, In recognition of the men and women who served with dignity and honor during this historic time period, let us remember them and thank them for their service; and

WHEREAS, More than three million servicemen and women left their families to bravely serve a world away in places such as Ia Drang to Khe Sanh, from Hue to Saigon, and countless villages in between; they pushed through jungles and rice paddies, heat and monsoons, fighting to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans; and

WHEREAS, Through more than a decade of combat, over air, land, and sea, these proud Americans upheld the highest traditions of the United States Armed Forces; 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 the 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 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 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 way against North Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, the 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 were 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 29, 1973, the last 2,500 troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam thus ending military involvement in the Vietnam War; 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 state in the Nation to dedicate a Vietnam Memorial; and

WHEREAS, Beginning on Memorial Day 2012, the federal government began a partnership with local governments, private organizations and communities across the country to participate in the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, a 13-year program to honor and give thanks to a generation of proud Americans who saw our country through one of the most challenging times; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 90 of the Laws of 2008 designated March 29th of each year as Vietnam Veteran's Day in the State of New York. The chapter designates March 29 as a day of commemoration to honor those individuals who sacrificed for their country; and

WHEREAS, May 28, 2012, through November 11, 2025, is known as the

Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War as declared by President Barack Obama, by Presidential Proclamation dated May 25, 2012; and

WHEREAS, March 28, 2017, President Donald Trump signed the Vietnam War Recognition Act of 2017; the measure amended Title 4 of the United States Code to encourage the flying of the American Flag on National Vietnam War Veterans Day every year on March 29th; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of this great State and Nation, benefactors of the sacrifices and courageous acts of the men and women who served and continue to serve in the United States Armed Forces, remain indebted and are justly proud of the Vietnam veterans from the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Corning East-West High School Class of 1968 Vietnam Veterans for their many good deeds and great accomplishments; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pauses further to encourage the people of the State of New York to observe 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 all 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 for 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 a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Class of 1968 Veterans.