

BY: Senator RAMOS

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 20, 2019, as Colombian Independence Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, Colombian Americans have contributed greatly to the wealth and cultural heritage of our great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 20, 2019, as Colombian Independence Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, On July 20, 1810, Colombian patriots stirred the population of Bogota into street protests against Spanish rule; this was the beginning of the process that, after almost a decade, led to the definitive independence of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, It was in Pore, Casanare, that generals Simon Bolivar and Francisco de Paula Santander, and the Provincial Congress proclaimed their intentions to form a new government separate of the Spaniards in 1818; and

WHEREAS, Eight years after their initial "cry for independence" in 1810, the pro-independence army left Pore and ultimately defeated their colonial masters during the legendary Battle of Boyaca; and

WHEREAS, Two hundred years after Simon Bolivar and Francisco de Paula Santander led the fight for the independence from Spain and established the Republica; despite the challenges they have met along their history, the Colombian people have developed a strong national identity; and

WHEREAS, Simon Bolivar escaped to Cartagena, the main seaport of neighboring Colombia, which is in rebel hands, and here he pens a powerful political pamphlet, the "Manifesto de Cartagena," addressed to the citizens of New Granada; in it, he offers the inspiring vision of a united effort to expel the Spaniards; and

WHEREAS, In 1819, Simon Bolivar's small force, of only about 2,500 men, used cowhide boats to cross a succession of flooded tributaries of the Orinoco; this ordeal is followed by one even worse, a mountain crossing during which a considerable number of the independence band die of cold; and

WHEREAS, However, the surprise holds, and the men descend from the high passes upon an unsuspecting enemy; the Spanish army surrendered after a skirmish at Boyaca, on August 7, 1819; three days later Simon Bolivar enters Bogota, and the Republica de Colombia is proclaimed on December 17th; once the independence process was completed, the new nation covered the entire region of modern Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela; and

WHEREAS, The first Colombian immigrants who settled in the United States likely arrived in the 1800s; the first Colombian Immigrants and Colombian Americans community formed after World War I, through the arrival of several hundred professionals who established themselves in New York City; later on, more people were added to the community when Colombian Immigrant students decided to stay in the United States after earning their degrees; and

WHEREAS, As of the 2000 Census, 228,400 Colombian Immigrants and Colombian Americans were living in the New York metro area, with a population of 138,768 in Jackson Heights, Queens; and

WHEREAS, Colombian Independence Day provides an opportunity to recognize the significance of their contributions to the quality and character of life, and, through events and activities, for all people to gain a greater appreciation of Colombian history and traditions, and of the role Colombian Americans have played, and will continue to play, in our society; and

WHEREAS, By recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of Colombian Americans, this great Empire State reaffirms our commitment to diversity and equal opportunity for all, thereby ensuring a bright future for all New Yorkers and Americans; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to recognize such events of significance which foster ethnic pride and exemplify the cultural diversity that represents and strengthens the fabric of the people and the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 20, 2019, as Colombian Independence Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.