

BY: Senator BIAGGI

MOURNING the death of Hector J. Figueroa, labor union leader, devoted family man, and dedicated member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York who distinguished themselves in service to the cause of working men and women; and

WHEREAS, 32BJ SEIU President Hector J. Figueroa of Jackson Heights, Queens, who died on Thursday, July 11, 2019, at age 57, was such a man; and

WHEREAS, Hector Jose Figueroa was born to Luis and Castita Figueroa on April 3, 1962, in Ponce, Puerto Rico; after graduating from high school, he attended the University of Puerto Rico for a short time before relocating to New York, where he lived with an aunt in the Bronx and earned his bachelor's degree in economics from New York University; he furthered his education by studying economics at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan; and

WHEREAS, Hector J. Figueroa dedicated his life to the labor movement, initially as a researcher with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in New York; he then joined the service workers union in Washington before going back to Puerto Rico to manage a successful campaign to organize public employees there; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, Hector J. Figueroa returned to New York, and served as both Secretary and Treasurer of 32BJ SEIU, a New York local branch of the Service Employees International Union, which represents more than 170,000 building cleaners, security guards, doormen and airport workers; 12 years later, he was elected to the title of President, and was re-elected last year; and

WHEREAS, In this capacity, Hector J. Figueroa led numerous successful campaigns for better pay and working conditions for thousands of low-wage workers; he supported the grass-roots effort by fast-food workers in New York which grew into a nationwide campaign for a higher minimum wage known as the Fight for 15; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Hector J. Figueroa was instrumental in procuring a substantial wage increase for 40,000 airport workers from New York City's three main airports; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous management of Hector J. Figueroa, 32BJ SEIU greatly increased its public presence and membership by 50,000 workers; and

WHEREAS, A passionate leader, Hector J. Figueroa was a man of vision who had a genuine concern for workers and the New York City community; he understood the needs of employers as well and worked effectively with

business owners and officials, earning their respect as well as that of his union members; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his mother, Hector J. Figueroa is survived by his wife, Deirdre McFadyen; his father, Luis; one daughter, Elena; one son, Eric; and one sister, Vilma; as well as numerous friends and workers throughout New York City who will long cherish his memory; and

WHEREAS, Hector J. Figueroa was truly a trailblazer who contributed greatly to the cause of working men and women in New York City and leaves an inspiring legacy for others to follow; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Hector J. Figueroa, labor union leader, devoted family man, and dedicated member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Hector J. Figueroa.