

**BY:** Senator KENNEDY

**MOURNING** the death of Ramona Donatta Aviles,  
devoted matriarch, distinguished citizen and beloved  
member of her community

**WHEREAS,** It is with profound intent that this Legislative Body is moved to pay homage to a woman of indomitable faith and dedication whose purposeful life and accomplishments will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to give acclaim to individuals of great character whose lives exemplify the highest ideals of humanity; and

**WHEREAS,** Ramona Donatta Aviles of Buffalo, New York, passed away on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, at the age of 96; and

**WHEREAS,** Ramona Donatta Rodriguez was born on August 31, 1923, in Anasco, Puerto Rico, where she attended school seasonally, up to the third grade; after the unfortunate death of her mother during the Great Depression, she became responsible for herself and was separated from her six siblings; and

**WHEREAS,** As a young woman on her own, Ramona Donatta Rodriguez supported herself by working as a servant and a maid; and

**WHEREAS,** In the 1950s, Ramona Donatta Rodriguez moved to New York City, and lived in a neighborhood with her fellow Puerto Ricans; she married her husband, Juan, and together, they settled in the Lower East Side of Manhattan; and

**WHEREAS,** Tragically, history seemed to repeat itself as Ramona Donatta Aviles' beloved husband died at the young age of 40, and she was left to raise her seven children; and

**WHEREAS,** Ramona Donatta Aviles remained steadfast in her faith and attended her local Pentecostal church daily; she humbly encouraged others to attend as well and would bring children of other families if their parents were not able; and

**WHEREAS,** On Wednesday, August 28, 1963, Ramona Donatta Aviles proudly boarded a bus with her son and fellow congregants and rode to Washington D.C. in support of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom; as she listened to Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his historic "I Have a Dream" speech, she envisioned a better and safer world for both her children and all those who felt the stigma of racism; and

**WHEREAS,** In the mid-1990s, Ramona Donatta Aviles moved to Buffalo where she attended church and the senior center at Hispanics United of Buffalo; upon losing her eyesight, she lived independently in a residence for the blind and disabled; every Sunday, she enjoyed spending

time with her cherished grandchildren as they listened to the church sermon on the radio; and

**WHEREAS,** Through Ramona Donatta Aviles' good works, wisdom, and compassion, her sons and daughters have gone on to devote themselves to serving their community, making it a better place to live, work and play; and

**WHEREAS,** Predeceased by her mother and her husband, Ramona Donatta Aviles is survived by her seven children, 15 grandchildren, and 30 great-grandchildren, as well as numerous friends who will long cherish her memory; and

**WHEREAS,** Our society is greatly benefited by the purposeful efforts of individuals who unite for the cause of improving the quality of life for others, and who proactively work toward the goal of dignity for all; and

**WHEREAS,** Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Ramona Donatta Aviles leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all she served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Ramona Donatta Aviles, devoted matriarch, distinguished citizen and beloved member of her community; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Ramona Donatta Aviles.