

BY: Senator COONEY

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of the Annual
Community Gay Pride Picnic of Rochester, New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize the profound impact of those exemplary organizations within the great State of New York which proactively work for the empowerment of minority communities, and the importance of such work which benefits all citizens of this State, and indeed, all citizens of the Nation, should be rightfully commended; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Annual Community Gay Pride Picnic of Rochester, New York; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of the City of Rochester and its surrounding areas have been committed to the advancement of the notion that New York is a place where LGBTQ+ individuals can thrive; and

WHEREAS, In 1971, almost two years following the Stonewall Riots, the Rochester Gay Liberation Front (a University of Rochester student organization) assembled over 300 people to perform a "sit-in" at Genesee Valley Park; that "sit-in" turned into "a happening" when participants brought food and played sports throughout the day; this was the first local event celebrating Pride in the Rochester community; and

WHEREAS, The First Annual Community Gay Pride Picnic took place in 1972, the year after the sit in, which is often referred to as the "gay-in"; this first Picnic was organized by courageous LGBTQ+ pioneers Karen Hagberg, Bob Crystal and Patty Evans; and

WHEREAS, The hosts, organizers and sponsors of the Pride Picnic change frequently, over the years, and in 1973, the Picnic became a fundraiser for the then newly created Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley; and

WHEREAS, In the 1980s, as the national gay rights movement was exploding, changes occurred in almost every LGBTQ+ community across the country; the Pride Picnic grew in attendance and the number of activities, reaching 2,000 participants in 1983; with further growth in the 1990s that included over 3,000 people at most Pride Picnics, and increases though-out the 2000s with attendance reaching close to 4,000 picnickers and festival goers; and

WHEREAS, In 1989, a Pride Parade was introduced alongside the Annual Picnic in the City; the first Parade was held on a portion of East Main Street in the early evening of Wednesday, June 28, 1989, on the 20th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City; the choice to hold it on this date was a symbolic strategy which would show the citizens of Rochester that the fight for equal rights remained ongoing; and

WHEREAS, As the Picnic grew in attendance, the attractions and Pride activities grew including: Ride For Pride, Stonewall Cookout, ROC Pride 5K, Silent Disco, Trans Sip and Paint, Drag Bingo, and more; and

WHEREAS, This year, the 50th Anniversary Pride Picnic's theme is titled "A Legacy of Pride," with the overall theme for Pride Week being "Pride in Bloom" is taking place at the Roundhouse Shelter at Genesee Valley Park on Sunday, July 10, 2022, kicking off Rochester's Pride Week; and

WHEREAS, The 2022 Pride Picnic is being hosted by the ROC Pride Collective, a community-based coalition dedicated to celebrating LGBTQ+ Pride in the Greater Rochester area; they are committed to empowering all local LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies, and strive to create safe, open spaces where participants can feel comfortable to be their authentic selves; 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Annual Community Gay Pride Picnic of Rochester, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the ROC Pride Collective.