

**BY:** Senator RIVERA

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim  
January 2021, as Birth Defects Prevention Month in  
the State of New York

**WHEREAS,** It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months that are set aside to increase awareness of serious health issues that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim January 2021, as Birth Defects Prevention Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Birth Defects Prevention Month; and

**WHEREAS,** Birth defects are structural or functional anomalies present at the birth of a child, which can affect one or more parts of the body; and

**WHEREAS,** Birth defects can be detected before birth, at birth, or any time after the birth of a child, but are most commonly found within the first year of life; most defects generate within the first 3 months of pregnancy as the baby begins to form organs; and

**WHEREAS,** About half of all pregnancies are unplanned, contributing to late entry into prenatal care and presenting a barrier to optimal pregnancy management, particularly during the crucial first weeks of a baby's development; and

**WHEREAS,** Early identification of a child with a birth defect coupled with early intervention services typically improves the child's quality of life and may even save his or her life; and

**WHEREAS,** These defects can affect how the body works, develops, looks, or all three and can range from mild to severe defects; and

**WHEREAS,** While some birth defects have clear causes and known methods of prevention, such as fetal alcohol syndrome and spina bifida, a mix of genetic or environmental factors causes most other birth defects; and

**WHEREAS,** Unfortunately, it is not fully understood how these factors work together to cause birth defects and they are difficult to prevent; and

**WHEREAS,** Every four and a half minutes, a baby in the United States is born with a birth defect; birth defects are a leading cause of death in the first year of life, causing one in every five infant deaths; and

**WHEREAS,** These conditions lead to more than \$2.6 billion per year in hospital costs alone in the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** In New York State, over 7,000 infants are born each year with at least one birth defect; birth defects in New York account for about 379 infant deaths every year; and

**WHEREAS,** Birth defects can occur in any family regardless of race, ethnicity, health history, economic status, or level of education; and

**WHEREAS,** The National Birth Defects Prevention Network and CDC encourage parents-to-be to reduce the chance of developing an infection during pregnancy by observing the following guidelines: get vaccinated, prevent insect bites, and practice good hygiene; and

**WHEREAS,** The good health and well-being of the people of the State of New York are enhanced by the support of a national effort to educate about preconception health and strategies to prevent birth defects; and

**WHEREAS,** It is imperative that there be greater awareness of this serious health issue, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, State and National levels; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim January 2021, as Birth Defects Prevention Month 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.