Senate Resolution No. 2001

BY: Senator ROLISON

HONORING Mary Ellen Still upon the occasion of her retirement after 46 years of distinguished service to Dutchess County

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body seeks to acknowledge those individuals whose professional lives and civic endeavors serve to enhance the stature of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, For the past 46 years, Mary Ellen Still rendered faithful, conscientious, and valuable service to the residents of Dutchess County and beyond; and

WHEREAS, In her capacity as probation director, Mary Ellen Still served with loyalty, honor and distinction; and

WHEREAS, Beginning her career in County government in 1978 as a probation officer trainee, Mary Ellen Still eventually served every function in the Office of Probation and Community Corrections, being promoted to senior probation officer, supervisor, and deputy director, respectively, before then-County Executive William R. Steinhaus appointed her as Director in 2002; she has served faithfully in this position for the last 22 years; and

WHEREAS, Mary Ellen Still graduated from the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Corrections Executive Excellence Program in 2000, as well as Sam Houston University's Executive Orientation Program in 2002; and

WHEREAS, Mary Ellen Still led the Office of Probation and Community Corrections, overseeing nearly 50 employees who protect the community through intervention in the lives of those under supervision, facilitating compliance with court orders, and serving as a catalyst for positive change; her department promotes public safety through effective supervision of some 2,000 defendants and probationers placed on community supervision by the courts, through evidence-based probation and diversion programs; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her career, Mary Ellen Still has been a champion of community engagement and collaboration, forging strong partnerships with local organizations, law-enforcement agencies, and community leaders to develop practical and effective solutions; she has actively worked to create a holistic approach to pretrial services and probation supervision, emphasizing rehabilitation, support, and the reintegration of individuals back into society; and

WHEREAS, Dedicating her professional life to Dutchess County's Office of Probation and Community Corrections, ensuring public safety through her innovative solutions - in the process, becoming an esteemed national authority on restorative justice; she has been a driving force in the transformation of the county's probation and community

corrections programs, implementing effective strategies that prioritize rehabilitation, public safety, and community well-being, including her highly successful alternatives to incarceration; and

WHEREAS, Mary Ellen Still has been involved with the Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council (CJC) since its original formation in 1993, and currently serves as CJC Chair; the Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council has been an innovative, national model for working in a collaborative process of information-sharing to maximize resources for an enhanced criminal justice process, utilizing research-based practices to ensure community safety through the promotion and support of intervention for at-risk youth and adults, addressing victims' needs and reduction of recidivism; and

WHEREAS, As Probation Director, Mary Ellen Still has been involved with a multitude of efforts to help individuals who encounter the criminal justice system, including the development of specialized courts for veterans and substance users, as well as the creation of college credit classes at the Dutchess County Jail and through EXODUS Transitional Community; she also oversees programs such as RESTART, Project M.O.R.E. and Family Services, as well as RECHARGE to provide justice-involved people with supportive housing and services to increase participants' success once they return to their community; and

WHEREAS, Committed to active involvement and impactful change throughout her career, Mary Ellen Still has been instrumental in navigating the evolving New York State bail reform legislation that first passed in 2019 and has undergone various revisions, significantly impacting the criminal justice system process throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, A trusted leader throughout New York State, and as a result of her unrelenting commitment to the field, Mary Ellen Still was appointed to serve as Commissioner on the State Probation Commission to advise and consult on all matter relating to probation in the State in 2022; and

WHEREAS, Mary Ellen Still is the current Chair of Training and Qualifications Committee for New York State Council of Probation Administrators; Chair of New York State Council of Probation Administrators Area III; as well as being a member of the New York State Probation Commission and the Dutchess County Police Chiefs Association; she is a past member of the Dutchess County Universal Response to Domestic Violence, and she previously served as a member of the New York State Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board; and

WHEREAS, Devoted to making her community a better place, Mary Ellen Still has served on various boards and committees, including the County's Mental Hygiene Board, Family Services Board, the Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. She has also served on various workgroups and committees of NYS DCJS, including Staff Development, Revision of Rules and Regulations Governing Probation, Domestic Violence Workgroup; and

WHEREAS, Mary Ellen Still also worked with the Center for Effective

Public Policy, engaged in a collaborative project with researchers from the University of Cincinnati and the University of Houston on gender-responsive strategies, and, in partnership with the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (NYS DCJS), worked with the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice on a comprehensive review of the probation and juvenile justice system to

enhance system practices, resulting in development of trauma assessment and interventions for young people; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women and American Jail Association invited Mary Ellen Still to speak at its national summit in Washington, D.C., where she presented on the development and current use of the Inventory of Needs instrument - a pretrial and screening tool for justice-involved women used to create unique case plans based on women's needs, resulting in better pretrial and supervision outcomes; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of numerous awards and accolades, Mary Ellen Still has received: the Arlington Rotary's Recognition of Service in 1995; the Van Bramer Award from Mental Health Association in 2005; New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services' Sara Tullar Fasoldt Leadership and Humanitarian Award in 2011; recognition by the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence for Outstanding Contributions to Victims in 2003; and Project M.O.R.E.'s 2015 Distinguished Service Award, among others; and

WHEREAS, In her official acts, Mary Ellen Still was governed by a keen sense of duty and always showed a unique grasp of human problems; and

WHEREAS, During her tenure with Dutchess County, Mary Ellen Still earned the admiration, esteem, and affection of her colleagues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Mary Ellen Still upon the occasion of her retirement after 46 years of distinguished service; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Mary Ellen Still.