Senate Resolution No. 2721

BY: Senator SANDERS

COMMEMORATING Marcus Garvey's Birthday on August 17, 2024

WHEREAS, From time to time we take note of certain individuals whom we wish to recognize for their valued contributions and to publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to join the people of this great Empire State in proudly observing the 137th birthday of Marcus Garvey on August 17, 2024, taking note of his many accomplishments and contributions to mankind; and

WHEREAS, Born August 17, 1887, in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, Marcus Garvey was a charismatic Black leader who organized the first important American Black nationalist movement (1919-26), based in New York City's Harlem; and

WHEREAS, Largely self-taught, Marcus Garvey attended school in Jamaica until he was 14; after traveling in Central America and living in London from 1912 to 1914, he returned to Jamaica, where, with a group of friends, he founded (August 1, 1914) the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League, notably called the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which sought, among other things, to build a Black-governed nation; and

WHEREAS, Struggling to attract a following in Jamaica, Marcus Garvey emigrated to the United States (1916) and soon established branches of the UNIA in Harlem and the other areas of the North; and

WHEREAS, By 1919, the rising "Black Moses" claimed a following of about 2,000,000, leading the largest African-American movement for human rights and economic self-sufficiency of all time, and attracting millions of followers in the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, and Europe; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, during this time, he established the Negro Factories Corporation and the Black Star Line (1919), as well as a chain of restaurants and grocery stores, laundries, a hotel, and a printing press; and

WHEREAS, Marcus Garvey reached the height of his power in 1920, when he presided at an international convention in Liberty Hall, with delegates present from 25 countries; the affair was climaxed by a parade of 50,000 through the streets of Harlem, led by Garvey in flamboyant array; and

WHEREAS, Marcus Garvey's influence declined rapidly when he and other UNIA members were indicted for mail fraud in 1922 in connection with the sale of stock for the Black Star Line; he served two years of a

five-year prison term, but in 1927 his sentence was commuted by U.S. President Calvin Coolidge, and he was deported; and

WHEREAS, The case against Marcus Garvey was politically motivated, the charges unsubstantiated, and his conviction unjust; millions of petitioners have appealed for his exoneration; his philosophy inspired some of the world's great Black leaders; and

WHEREAS, Marcus Garvey is recognized as a national hero in his native Jamaica, and as a towering figure in nations around the world; his life and contributions to the United States should be recognized and appropriate steps taken to restore his name and reputation in this country; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate Marcus Garvey's Birthday on August 17, 2024.