Senate Resolution No. 482

**BY:** Senator PARKER

**COMMENDING** the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York upon the occasion of hosting its Celebration of Women Luncheon, in conjunction with the observance of Women's History Month

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations of high purpose and worthy accomplishment whose endeavors have faithfully served the welfare of the citizens of the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York upon the occasion of hosting its Celebration of Women Luncheon, in conjunction with the observance of Women's History Month on Saturday, March 25, 2023; and

**WHEREAS,** Each year New York State officially sets aside time to recognize the unique contributions that New York women have made to New York State and beyond; and

**WHEREAS,** New York State has a distinguished history of monumental achievements in the area of women's rights; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1826, New York State opened one of the first public high schools for girls resulting in a future for women in which they were no longer confined to the home, a future in which they were educated and able to use this education to better their social and economic status; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1848 in New York, the first women's rights convention was held at Seneca Falls to secure for all women the right to vote; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1903, The Women's Trade Union League of New York was formed to represent working women, later becoming the nucleus for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1917, New York guaranteed women the right to vote in all elections and in the following year the first two women, Ida Sammis and Mary Lilly, were elected to the New York State Legislature and became the first women to then serve in 1919; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1955, Bessie Buchanan was the first African-American woman to serve in the New York State Legislature; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1967, Muriel Siebert became the first woman to own a seat on the New York Stock Exchange, opening the door for women to gain positions of greater economic power; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1968, New York State Assemblywoman Shirley Chisholm became the first black woman elected to Congress and in 1972, she ran for President of the United States, another first for black women; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1970, New York City was the site of the first Women's Strike for Equality in which 50,000 people marched for equal rights; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1978, Olga Mendez became the first Latina woman to serve in the New York State Legislature; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1983, New York State women legislators established the Legislative Women's Caucus to improve the participation of women in all areas of government, support issues that benefit women and provide a network of support for women in the State Legislature; and

**WHEREAS,** In 2007, Ellen Young was the first Asian-American woman to serve in the New York State Legislature; and

**WHEREAS,** In 2009, New Yorker Sonia Sotomayor became the first Hispanic Justice appointed to the United States Supreme Court; and

**WHEREAS,** In 2015, New Yorker Loretta Elizabeth Lynch was appointed as Attorney General of the United States, becoming the first African-American woman to serve in this esteemed position; and

**WHEREAS,** New York has been the home of many extraordinary women who have led society to a better future: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony led the campaign for women's suffrage; Sojourner Truth spoke out for the abolition of slavery and for suffrage for all women; and

**WHEREAS,** Carrie Chapman Catt became the first president of the League of Women Voters; Emma Willard opened the first endowed institution for the education of women; Civil War surgeon Dr. Mary E. Walker was the only woman ever awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor; Harriet Tubman was an abolitionist who led slaves to freedom by way of the Underground Railroad in the 19th Century; and

**WHEREAS,** Elizabeth Blackwell and Belva Lockwood were the first women in the fields of medicine and law; pioneer birth control educator and advocate Margaret Sanger established a research center in New York City; and

**WHEREAS,** Emma Goldman founded the Free Speech League which led to the American Civil Liberties Union; humanitarian Eleanor Roosevelt served as United States Delegate to the United Nations; and

**WHEREAS,** New Yorker Edith Windsor fought to expand marriage equality in the United States prior to the Marriage Equality Act of New York which became law in 2011; and

**WHEREAS,** Civil rights lawyer and New York State Senator Constance Baker Motley became the first black woman to sit on the U.S. District Court in New York, and there have been so many more known and unknown women who championed rights and opportunity for all; and

**WHEREAS,** New York State has hosted many conventions, campaigns and events of the Women's Rights Movement from the 1848 convention at Seneca Falls to the 1999 Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, which was held to improve the status of women in history and in the historical professions; and

**WHEREAS,** 50% of statewide elected officials are women and for the first time, a woman has been elected Attorney General in the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS,** 2023 marks the 103rd Anniversary of the 19th amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote in the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** The dedicated Masons of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York are men with a social conscience and a charitable perspective, who are also known as Freemasons; they are part of a fraternal organization that shares common moral ideals and esoteric values which are based on the doctrine of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth; and

**WHEREAS,** The oldest fraternity in the world, Freemasons come from all walks of life and are actively involved in their community; they march in parades, dedicate buildings, visit the sick and shut in, and feed the less fortunate; and

**WHEREAS,** The success of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York is in direct correlation to the efforts of its Grand Master Gregory Robeson Smith Jr. and its members, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the institution and the community it serves; and

**WHEREAS,** This Legislative Body is proudly moved to honor and commend the members of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York, Free and Accepted Masons, past and present, who have labored so conscientiously to secure and improve the quality of life for the community it serves; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York upon the occasion of hosting its Celebration of Women Luncheon, in conjunction with the observance of Women's History Month; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Grand Master Gregory Robeson Smith Jr., Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York.