Assembly Resolution No. 2174

BY: M. of A. Peoples-Stokes

COMMEMORATING the two-year Anniversary of the mass shooting at Tops Friendly Markets in Buffalo, New York, on May 14, 2024, and honoring the victims, survivors, families, and community at large in wake of this devastating tragedy

WHEREAS, The very principles of American freedom, and the safety and security of every American at home and abroad were challenged by the unspeakable atrocities committed in the East Side of Buffalo, during a sunny afternoon on Saturday, May 14, 2022, at a Tops grocery store located on historic Jefferson Ave; and

WHEREAS, As we mark the two-year anniversary of this senseless massacre, Buffalo is conducting an array of events to honor those who lost their lives and to uplift the community, including the 5/14 Blue Flag Initiative in honor of the lives taken during the 5/14 racially-motivated mass shooting at Tops on Jefferson Avenue; this initiative is sponsored by Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and is a collaboration between the Mayor's Office, the City of Buffalo Common Council, Buffalo Public Schools, and local artists Brandon Watson and Brendan Bannon; the initiative calls for the creation of blue cyanotype-design flags that will be hung along the Jefferson Avenue corridor, and members of the public were invited to attend one of several cyanotype flag-making workshops at various locations throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, Other events in honor of the anniversary of this profound tragedy include the Tragedy and Triumph 5K, sponsored by Legacy 5.14 Inc., benefitting the 5/14 Memorial Scholarship which awards scholarships to 10 college-bound seniors from Buffalo high schools, and on May 14, 2024, the community will gather for a remembrance ceremony at the Tops supermarket; additionally, church bells will chime at 2:28 p.m., the moment the 123-second rampage began; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, as we remember this horrific day, we honor the 10 innocent people who were killed: Roberta A. Drury, Geraldine Talley, Celestine Chaney, Katherine Massey, Pearl Young, Ruth Whitfield, Margus D. Morrison, Andre Mackneil, retired Buffalo Police Lieutenant Aaron Salter, and Heyward Patterson; and

WHEREAS, In addition, we honor the survivors: Jennifer Warrington, Zaire Goodman, and Christopher Braden; and

WHEREAS, The May 14th Memorial Commission was established by Governor Kathy Hochul and Mayor Byron Brown to combat racism in all forms and work towards a future where hatred and bigotry are a thing of the past; the Commission, led by Buffalo NAACP President Reverend Mark Blue, will have a leading role in uplifting the East Buffalo community; and

WHEREAS, For all New Yorkers, the images of this horrific domestic act of terrorism rekindles heartbreaking memories and causes us to pause and reflect on our daily lives; and

WHEREAS, The very heart and soul of America was once more shaken to its core and this tragedy stands as a reminder that such senseless acts of violence will not destroy the honorable values that America stands for; and

WHEREAS, The power of human compassion and the strength and spirit of the American people were revealed in Buffalo as we learned of the immediate and heroic outpouring of service and concern for the victims of this act of terrorism and in its aftermath; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body cannot express sufficient gratitude to those devoted first responders, including police officers, Erie County sheriff's deputies, and FBI agents, as well as paramedics and firefighters, who inspire us all by carrying out their sworn duties with great courage and bravery; and

WHEREAS, The combined and coordinated efforts of these individuals and their swift response are a testament to the spirit of unity and fellowship in the face of adversity which characterizes the best of America; and

WHEREAS, The people of the State of New York stand steadfast in their solidarity with Buffalo, New York, honoring all of whom were victimized by the city's worst mass shooting on Saturday, May 14, 2022, and standing resolute in our obligation to condemn racism, domestic terrorism, and all forms of hatred; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the two-year Anniversary of the mass shooting at Tops Friendly Supermarkets, and to extend to the people of Buffalo the sincerest best wishes and heartfelt prayers of all New Yorkers; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to survivors and families of the victims of this horrific act of domestic terrorism.