Assembly Resolution No. 488

BY: M. of A. Durso

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2023, as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to help increase awareness of serious health conditions 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, this Legislative Body hereby memorializes Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2023, as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of the 26th Anniversary of ALS Ride for Life; and

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), sometimes called Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive disease that attacks the nerve cells that control voluntary movement; and

WHEREAS, In ALS, both the upper motor neurons and the lower motor neurons degenerate or die, ceasing to send messages to muscles; unable to function, the muscles gradually weaken, waste away, and twitch; ultimately, the ability of the brain to start and control voluntary movement is lost; and

WHEREAS, Once ALS starts, it almost always progresses, eventually taking away the ability to walk, dress, write, speak, swallow and breathe, and shortening the life span; and

WHEREAS, ALS is 100% fatal and has few treatments to improve the quality of life; and

WHEREAS, There are two different types of ALS, sporadic and familial; sporadic, which is the most common form of the disease in the United States, encompasses 90 percent of all cases; it may affect anyone, anywhere; familial ALS (FALS) accounts for 10 percent of all cases in the United States and means the disease is inherited; and

WHEREAS, Most people live about three to five years after they experience their first signs of disease, with one in 10 people surviving at least 10 years; the variable rate of disease progression makes prognosis difficult to predict and therapies challenging to develop; and

WHEREAS, Every 90 minutes, someone is diagnosed with ALS; people who develop ALS are generally between the ages of 40 and 70, with the majority after age 60, although it can occur at a younger age; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 5,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with ALS each year; the incidence of ALS is two per 100,000 people; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, it is estimated that more than 30,000 Americans may be living with ALS at any given time; and

WHEREAS, Most surveys find that ALS is more common in men than women, though that gap may be closing; in addition, military veterans are approximately twice as likely to develop ALS; and

WHEREAS, ALS occurs throughout the world with no obvious racial, ethnic or socioeconomic boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month increases the public's awareness of ALS patients' circumstances and acknowledges the terrible impact this disease has not only on patients but on their families as well; and

WHEREAS, The ALS Ride for Life was founded in 1997 by Christopher Pendergast (PALS) who defied the odds, living with ALS for 28 years; and

WHEREAS, Prior to his death in October of 2020, Christopher Pendergast served as the President and driving force of this vital organization where he led a small but mighty staff and many volunteers; since its inception, the ALS Ride for Life has provided funding to many leading research facilities across the country including, Stony Brook University, Johns Hopkins, and Columbia Presbyterian; and

WHEREAS, Christopher Pendergast's legacy will long endure the passage of time as we celebrate the 26th Anniversary of the ALS Ride for Life which benefits countless initiatives in the fight to save lives from this devastating disease; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater awareness of this serious health condition, 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 Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2023, as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and the ALS Ride for Life.