Assembly Resolution No. 558

BY: M. of A. Hunter

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim Monday, June 12, 2023, as Women Veterans Recognition Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, Seventy-five years ago, on June 12, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed into law the Women's Armed Services Act of 1948 (P.L. 625-80th Congress); this law ensured that women would have a permanent place in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines; and

WHEREAS, The late Senator Margaret Chase Smith from Maine authorized the legislation that President Truman signed; the Act remains the most significant legislation pertaining to women's military service and is the cornerstone for policies and regulations affecting women; and

WHEREAS, Women have always answered the call to duty, serving the United States of America with integrity and respect; and

WHEREAS, When the draft ended in 1973, women represented just two percent of the enlisted forces and eight percent of the officer corps; today sixteen percent of the enlisted force are women and nineteen percent of women are in the officer corps; and

WHEREAS, Women from New York who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States have made countless contributions and tremendous sacrifices; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the contributions of New York women veterans, and to educate the people of New York concerning the role of women in our military; and

WHEREAS, Women serving in the military continue to demonstrate their professionalism, dedication, leadership, and skills, as well as the patriotism and love for their country as they mobilize in record numbers to support Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve and the Global War on Terrorism; and

WHEREAS, Today, there are more than two million women veterans in the United States, representing 10 percent of the total veteran's population; and

WHEREAS, There are approximately 714,00 veterans in New York state, 8.8 percent are women veterans; and

WHEREAS, Women who have served this country in uniform, during wartime and peacetime service, have earned our respect and thanks; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, the State of New York dedicated The New York State Women Veterans Memorial located in Albany, New York, to honor the 1.2 million women in military service over the past 200 years; and

WHEREAS, In January 2013, an announcement was made by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta that the military would be lifting the policy against women in combat roles; and

WHEREAS, The first woman to serve aboard a Navy fast-attack submarine reported to duty on the USS Minnesota in January of 2015; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion elected its first female national commander at their 99th National Convention in August of 2017; Commander Denise Rohn served on active duty as a stock control and accounting specialist and repair parts specialist course instructor at Fort Lee, Virginia, where she was honorably discharged in 1976; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Department of New York elected US Navy veteran Rena M. Nessler at the 99th Convention in Syracuse, New York, in July of 2017; Commander Nessler served from 1969 to 1972, and was honorably discharged as a yeoman third class; she is the first woman to hold the position of Commander of The American Legion Department of New York; and

WHEREAS, Governor Hochul named the Reverend Viviana DeCohen on Tuesday, November 9, 2019, as the Director of the New York State Division of Veterans' Services; DeCohen is a veteran who served in the United States Marine Corps, is the former commissioner of the Mount Vernon City Veterans' Service Agency and associate pastor at Mount Vernon Heights Congregational Church; she is also a member of the American Legion Post 1038 in Valhalla, New York, Women Marines Association, and the Navy League; and

WHEREAS, Women Veterans Recognition Day is a living testament to the courage of so many; from its broad base of shared concern and responsive endeavor, there yet emanates the current of valiant tradition and the irrepressible tide of freedom; and

WHEREAS, Through its avowed commitment to those who have served in the cause of America's Freedom, Women Veterans Recognition Day does so unselfishly advance the spirit of the united purpose and shared concern which is the unalterable manifestation of our American experience; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to pay tribute to the bravery, patriotism and sacrifice made by women, both those still living and those who died in service of our great country; and most proudly to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the signing of the Women's Armed Forces Service Act of 1948, which later came to be known as Women Veterans Recognition Day; and to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim Monday, June 12, 2023, as Women Veterans Recognition Day 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 Viviana M. DeCohen, Director of the New York State Division of Veterans' Services.