Assembly Resolution No. 565

BY: M. of A. Zebrowski

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 8-14, 2023, as Fire Prevention Week in the State of New York

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body has the deepest pride and admiration for the fire departments of New York State which perform the crucial work of fire protection and fire prevention; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 8-14, 2023, as Fire Prevention Week in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Fire Prevention Week; and

WHEREAS, National Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres; it began on October 8, but continued into and did most of its damage on October 9, 1871; and

WHEREAS, While the Great Chicago Fire was the best-known blaze to start during this fiery two-day stretch, it was not the biggest; that distinction goes to the Peshtigo Fire, the most devastating forest fire in American history, which also occurred on October 8, 1871, and roared through Northeast Wisconsin, burning down 16 towns, killing 1,152 people, and scorching 1.2 million acres before it ended; and

WHEREAS, Those who survived the Chicago and Peshtigo fires never forgot what they had been through; both blazes produced countless tales of bravery and heroism, but also changed the way firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety; and

WHEREAS, On the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, the Fire Marshals Association of North America, today known as the International Fire Marshals Association, decided that it should henceforth be observed not with festivities, but in a way that would keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention; and

WHEREAS, The commemoration grew incrementally official over the years; in 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which October 9th falls; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, National Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance on record; the President of the United States has signed a proclamation declaring a national observance during that week every year since 1925; and

WHEREAS, During Fire Prevention Week, children, adults, and teachers learn how to stay safe in case of a fire; firefighters provide lifesaving public education in an effort to drastically decrease casualties caused by fires; and

WHEREAS, Every 23 seconds, a fire department in the United States responds to a fire somewhere in the nation; a fire occurs in a structure at the rate of one every 64 seconds, and a home fire occurs every 89 seconds; and

WHEREAS, Fire departments responded to an estimated 1,388,500 fires, in 2020; these fires caused an estimated 3,500 civilian deaths and 15,200 civilian injuries; and

WHEREAS, An estimated $15.9 billion in property damage occurred as a result of fires in 2021; and

WHEREAS, The 338,000 home structure fires, which includes one-and two-family homes and apartments, caused 2,840 civilian deaths; this includes 2,440 civilian deaths in one- and two-family homes and 400 in apartments or other multi-family housing, including condominiums; furthermore, seventy-five percent of civilian fire deaths resulted from home fires; and WHEREAS It is imperative that there be greater awareness of ways in which we can prevent loss of life and property from fire; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 8-14, 2023, as Fire Prevention Week in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.