Assembly Resolution No. 894

BY: M. of A. Barrett

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 3-9, 2024, as School Social Worker Week in the State of New York

WHEREAS, School social workers serve as vital members of a school's education team, playing a central role in creating partnerships between the home, school, and community to ensure student academic success; and

WHEREAS, School social workers are especially skilled in providing services to students who face serious challenges to school success, including disability, poverty, discrimination, abuse, neglect, mental illness, homelessness, bullying, familial stressors, and other barriers to learning; and

WHEREAS, School social workers are more necessary now than any time in recent memory, as more students are struggling with mental and behavioral health disorders, with nearly one in five children having a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder; and

WHEREAS, Those who wish to access community mental health services often find them unavailable, inaccessible, or inadequate; and

WHEREAS, School mental health programs are critical to early identification of and early intervention for mental health problems; and

WHEREAS, School social workers, being licensed mental health professionals in our schools, provide necessary assessment, interventions, counseling, family outreach, and community referrals; and

WHEREAS, School social workers are part of the New York State Safe Schools Task Force because their knowledge of school culture and school climate are necessary for responsible school safety planning; and

WHEREAS, School social workers contribute to increasing graduation rates in New York, including an eighty-three percent high school graduation rate in 2020, and a dropout rate of just six percent; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that school mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, dropout rates and discipline referrals, while improving academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of School Social Worker Week highlights the vital role school social workers play in the lives of students in New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 3-9, 2024, as School Social Worker Week in the State of New York, and to honor and recognize the contributions of school social workers to the success of students in schools across the State, as well as encourage the people of New York

State to observe School Social Worker Week with appropriate activities that promote awareness of the vital role of school social workers, in schools and in the community helping students prepare for their futures as productive, engaged citizens; 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.