

BY: Senator GRIFFO

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2026, as Autism Acceptance Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months and days designated to raise awareness of important issues that impact the lives of the citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, In keeping with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2026, as Autism Acceptance Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Autism Acceptance Month and World Autism Acceptance Day; and

WHEREAS, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability characterized by a range of conditions that affect individuals differently and to varying degrees; it typically appears in early childhood and can influence social interaction, communication, behavior, and self-regulation throughout a person's life; and

WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ASD affects approximately 1 in 36 children and 1 in 45 adults in the United States; it is a complex, lifelong condition that presents both challenges and unique strengths, varying from person to person; and

WHEREAS, While there is no known single cause of autism, early diagnosis and access to appropriate supports and services can significantly improve outcomes and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Autism affects individuals of all races and ethnicities, but disparities in diagnosis persist; CDC data consistently show that white children are more likely to be identified with ASD than Black or Hispanic children; contributing factors include stigma, limited access to healthcare, language barriers, and socioeconomic status-particularly impacting immigrant and low-income communities; and

WHEREAS, Boys are currently about 4.5 times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls; however, emerging research suggests that autism may present differently in girls, leading to underdiagnosis or misdiagnosis; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1970s, the Autism Society of America launched a national campaign to promote awareness, which Congress formally recognized in 1984; this effort was further amplified with the creation of the Autism Awareness Ribbon in 1999; and

WHEREAS, For over five decades, National Autism Awareness Month has helped educate the public, highlight the experiences of autistic individuals, and advocate for their inclusion and support in all areas of life; and

WHEREAS, The shift from Autism Awareness to Autism Acceptance Month reflects a broader effort not only to raise awareness but also to promote understanding, acceptance, and meaningful inclusion of people with autism in society; and

WHEREAS, Despite decades of progress, individuals with autism and their families continue to face significant unmet needs; it remains essential to build greater public awareness of the signs, challenges, and realities of autism, while equipping communities with the tools and knowledge needed to foster acceptance and create inclusive environments 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 April 2026, as Autism Acceptance Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Autism Acceptance Month and World Autism Acceptance Day; 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.