Senate Resolution No. 1538

**BY:** Senator PERSAUD

**COMMEMORATING** the 60th Anniversary of the Independence of Guyana

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay just tribute to the cultural heritage of the ethnic groups which comprise and contribute to the richness and diversity of the community of the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Independence of Guyana; and

**WHEREAS,** The people of this great State, Nation and Guyana enjoy a deep and abiding relationship rooted in kinship and culture; and

**WHEREAS,** Independence Day is a significant public holiday in Guyana; it is celebrated on May 26th every year and it is the day when the country attained its independence in 1966, when British Dominion over Guyana ended; and

**WHEREAS,** Guyana, officially the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, is a sovereign state on the Caribbean coast of South America; although Guyana is part of the Anglophone Caribbean, it is one of the few Caribbean countries that is part of South America; and

**WHEREAS,** The European voyagers discovered Guyana in 1498; as a result, the history of the country dates back to over 500 years; its history is interrupted by combats wrestled and triumphed, through properties lost and recovered since the French, Spanish, Dutch and British settlers battled for hundreds of years to occupy this territory; and

**WHEREAS,** Ultimately, the British Empire was able to take control of Guyana in 1814; the country attained its well-deserved independence from the British rulers on May 26, 1966; and

**WHEREAS,** In gaining her independence, Guyana today is a nation of 804,000 people that is the only English-speaking nation in South America; its citizens trace their roots across the Caribbean and India; and

**WHEREAS,** Historically, the region known as Guiana or Guyana comprised the large shield landmass north of the Amazon River and east of the Orinoco River known as the Land of Many Waters; and

**WHEREAS,** More than 80% of Guyana is still covered by forests, ranging from dry evergreen and seasonal forests to montane and lowland evergreen rainforests; these forests are home to more than a thousand species of trees; and

**WHEREAS,** Guyana's tropical climate, unique geology, and relatively pristine ecosystems support extensive areas of species-rich rainforests and natural habitats with high levels of endemism; approximately 8,000 species of plants occur in Guyana, half of which are found nowhere else; and

**WHEREAS,** Guyana has one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world, and with 1,168 vertebrate species and 814 bird species, boasts one of the richest mammalian fauna assemblages of any comparably sized area in the world; and

**WHEREAS,** The Guyana Shield region is little known and extremely rich biologically; unlike other areas of South America, over 70% of the natural habitat remains pristine; and

**WHEREAS,** Some notable landmarks to be found in Guyana include: Kaieteur Falls, the world's largest single-drop waterfall by volume; and St. George's Anglican Cathedral, one of the tallest wooden church structures in the world and the second tallest wooden house of worship after the Today Temple in Japan; and

**WHEREAS,** Currently, approximately 140,000 Guyanese immigrants live in New York City, making them the fifth-largest foreign-born population in the city; and

**WHEREAS,** Many Indo-Guyanese immigrants have settled among other South Asian immigrants in places such as Richmond Hill and Ozone Park Queens; other Guyanese are concentrated in large numbers in Brooklyn and the Bronx; and

**WHEREAS,** The 60th Anniversary of Guyana's Independence provides an opportunity to recognize the significance of their contributions to the quality and character of life, and, through events and activities, for all people to gain a greater appreciation of Guyanese history and traditions, and of the role Guyanese have played, and will continue to play, in our society; and

**WHEREAS,** This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to recognize such events of significance which foster ethnic pride and exemplify the cultural diversity that represents and strengthens the fabric of the people and the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Independence of Guyana; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Guyana Consul General to New York.