

Senate Resolution No. 1576

**BY:** Senator PARKER

**HONORING** First Central Baptist Church upon the occasion of hosting its 21st Annual Staten Island Black History Town Hall on February 21, 2026

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend institutions of faith and community leadership whose enduring commitment to justice, education, service, and civic engagement has strengthened the social fabric and moral foundation 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 honor First Central Baptist Church upon the occasion of hosting its 21st Annual Staten Island Black History Town Hall, to be held on Saturday, February 21, 2026; and

**WHEREAS,** Established in 1978 in the Stapleton section of Staten Island by a small group of devoted believers, First Central Baptist Church has grown from humble beginnings into a respected spiritual and community institution, rooted in worship, service, education, and a steadfast commitment to uplifting underserved communities; and

**WHEREAS,** For nearly five decades, First Central Baptist Church has served as both a house of worship and a center for community life, expanding its mission through the development of the Central Family Life Center and the delivery of programs addressing education, youth development, senior services, health awareness, economic empowerment, and social support; and

**WHEREAS,** Since 2005, First Central Baptist Church has been led by Rev. Dr. Demetrius S. Carolina, Sr., a widely respected pastor, educator, and advocate for justice and human rights, whose ministry has emphasized spiritual empowerment, educational equity, economic justice, and transformative community engagement at the local, national, and global levels; and

**WHEREAS,** Rev. Dr. Carolina is the founder of the Staten Island Black History Town Hall, a landmark annual forum that, for more than two decades, has created space for reflection, education, and dialogue, honoring Black history and achievement while addressing critical issues related to health, wellness, equity, and the collective future of the Staten Island community; and

**WHEREAS,** Through its programming and partnerships, the town hall has become one of Staten Island's most enduring civic gatherings, fostering unity across generations, strengthening collaboration among faith-based and community organizations, and elevating voices committed to justice, resilience, and shared progress; and

**WHEREAS,** The 21st Annual Staten Island Black History Town Hall,

convening under the theme "Thriving Together, Through It All," reflects the enduring strength and perseverance of the community, affirming a collective commitment to healing, empowerment, and the well-being of mind, body, and spirit; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor First Central Baptist Church upon the occasion of hosting its 21st Annual Staten Island Black History Town Hall on February 21, 2026, and to recognize this meaningful event for its significant and lasting contributions to education, civic engagement, and community empowerment; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Rev. Dr. Demetrius S. Carolina, Sr., and to the leadership and congregation of First Central Baptist Church, as a lasting expression of the respect and appreciation of the New York State Legislature.