Senate Resolution No. 1736

BY: Senator MARTINS

COMMENDING nine members of the Glen Cove Fire Department upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of the Firefighter of the Year Award for their heroic efforts in saving the lives of 12 individuals

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those distinguished firefighters and citizens who would devote themselves to public service, demonstrating great courage and diligence in providing for the care and welfare of the citizens of their communities and this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Within every community of the State of New York there are certain individuals who, by virtue of their commitment and dedication, command the respect and admiration of their community for their exemplary contributions and service on behalf of others; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend nine members of the Glen Cove Fire Department upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of the Firefighter of the Year Award for their heroic efforts in directly saving the lives of 12 individuals involved in a building fire, who will be recognized at the Glen Cove Fire Department's Annual Installation Dinner on Saturday, April 11, 2026; and

WHEREAS, On Thursday, April 17, 2025, the Glen Cove Fire Department received a call regarding a fire in a two-story building containing 10 apartments; Captain Philip Grella III, 1st Assistant Chief Justin Valeo, 2nd Assistant Chief Carlos Cardenas, 2nd Lieutenant Christian Klimaszewski, Firefighter Rodni Leftwich Jr., Firefighter Henry Maldonado, Firefighter Ian Jackson, Ex-Chief Patrick Peet, and Ex-Chief Joseph Solomito of the Glen Cove Fire Department all reported to the scene that day; and

WHEREAS, Philip Grella III and Justin Valeo were the first to arrive at the scene, and when Justin Valeo arrived he witnessed five occupants, including a 6 year-old child, hanging out of a second-floor window with heavy smoke above their heads; simultaneously, police officers reported three additional individuals trapped at the rear of the building; and

WHEREAS, Upon hearing the reports of individuals trapped inside the building, the nine firefighters from the Glen Cove Fire Department immediately understood the severity and complexity of the situation, and each was determined to respond swiftly; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the arrival of any fire apparatus and filled with immense courage and bravery, Philip Grella III entered the burning building with full personal protective equipment and a water can with Glen Cove Police Officer Frank Vezza behind him; after using his water can to clear a path into a second-floor apartment, he was able to reach and evacuate three individuals; and

WHEREAS, Due to the intensity of the fire, Philip Grella III and the individuals he evacuated had to crawl through the building to avoid smoke and flames; with merely a water can, Philip Grella III was able to gain control of the situation and maintain a clear path for the civilians he was saving; and

WHEREAS, Justin Valeo and Rodni Leftwich Jr. quickly raised a 24-foot extension ladder to a window with trapped civilians while Henry Maldonado spoke to the trapped family in Spanish, calming them down, preventing them from jumping, and reassuring them that help was on the way; and

WHEREAS, When the ladder was prepared, Rodni Leftwich Jr. immediately climbed through the smoke in full personal protective equipment to grab the child hanging from the window; Justin Valeo then climbed the ladder to assist the mother down and was followed by two additional occupants who were able to escape on the ladder; and

WHEREAS, After these initial rescues, Henry Maldonado and Carlos Cardenas conducted searches through the heavy smoke on the first floor, and they successfully located four additional occupants in two separate apartments who had been asleep and unaware of the immediate danger; one individual was handicapped and was carried to safety by Carlos Cardenas and Henry Maldonado; and

WHEREAS, These initial rescues were all done without the protection of a charged hoseline, and every firefighter involved in the rescue efforts contributed despite the risk to their own personal safety; and

WHEREAS, Christian Klimaszewski, Philip Grella III, and Rodni Leftwich Jr. continued to search for trapped civilians inside the building; Ian Jackson and Patrick Peet worked diligently to stretch the first attack line while Joseph Solomito secured a positive water source to use to combat the fire; and

WHEREAS, Ian Jackson ascended through the heavy smoke and heat to the second floor with the hoseline to begin extinguishing the fire; Patrick Peet remained at the top of the staircase to feed more hose that would allow Ian Jackson to attack the fire within the apartment; and

WHEREAS, The efforts of the nine members of the Glen Cove Fire Department were extremely risky and potentially deadly; despite the risks, each member bravely put their personal safety aside to prioritize the rescue of the civilians involved in the fire; and

WHEREAS, As a result of their courage, swift decision-making, and deep sense of duty, the nine members of the Glen Cove Fire Department were able to successfully remove three civilians from the second floor via the interior staircase, five civilians from the second floor via a ground ladder and window, and four civilians via the hallway on the first floor; three additional civilians had self-evacuated via a second-floor balcony; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those dedicated public servants who unselfishly devote their lives to the preservation of order and the protection of others are worthy and due full praise for their commitment and noble endeavors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend nine members of the Glen Cove Fire Department upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of the Firefighter of the Year Award for their heroic efforts in directly saving the lives of 12 individuals involved in a building fire; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Captain Philip Grella III, 1st Assistant Chief Justin Valeo, 2nd Assistant Chief Carlos Cardenas, 2nd Lieutenant Christian Klimaszewski, Firefighter Rodni Leftwich Jr., Firefighter Henry Maldonado, Firefighter Ian Jackson, Ex-Chief Patrick Peet, and Ex-Chief Joseph Solomito.