

BY: Senator MYRIE

COMMEMORATING the 150th Anniversary of the Legal
Aid Society of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations of high purpose and worthy accomplishment whose endeavors have faithfully served the welfare of the citizens 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 150th Anniversary of the Legal Aid Society of New York; and

WHEREAS, Established in 1876, the Legal Aid Society of New York has stood with immigrants, low-income families, workers, and everyday New Yorkers across all five boroughs as a partner in justice; these individuals, whose wages were being withheld by unscrupulous bosses or had been imprisoned because they owed money, were aided by lawyers who fought predatory practices at boardinghouses and aboard ships; and

WHEREAS, From its beginning as an organization serving immigrants, sailors, women, and factory workers, the Legal Aid Society of New York has evolved throughout its 150 successful years; and

WHEREAS, The Legal Aid Society began as the German Legal Aid Society, with its original charter in German, and handled 212 cases in its first year and more than 23,000 in its first decade, winning unpaid wages worth \$3.6 million in today's dollars; after 20 years, it removed the word "German" from its name as it broadened its focus, serving approximately 7,500 clients from 37 countries in 1896; and

WHEREAS, Several of the United States Presidents, including Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Dwight D. Eisenhower, served as honorary vice presidents of the Legal Aid Society; and

WHEREAS, By 1920, the Legal Aid Society began representing defendants in criminal courts and arguing cases before the Supreme Court and the state's highest court that led to the expansion of defendants' rights; the Society has adapted to meet the needs of low-income New Yorkers by fighting housing discrimination and partnering to achieve systemic reform; and

WHEREAS, Every day, the Legal Aid Society fights to ensure that every New Yorker, no matter their income, has access to justice; the Society has protected, defended, and advocated for the rights of generations of vulnerable New Yorkers, their families, and their communities; from protecting tenants from wrongful evictions to defending the rights of immigrants, it stands with those who need it most; and

WHEREAS, For one and a half centuries, the Legal Aid Society has provided crucial legal services to the most vulnerable New Yorkers; it has been part of the fabric of New York City and a safety net for those in need; thus, it is deserving of the legal community's most enthusiastic support; and

WHEREAS, For 150 years of delivering justice, the Legal Aid Society has represented people who cannot afford to hire lawyers; from courtrooms to classrooms, sidewalks to city halls, this integral organization has empowered communities with the tools, voice, and representation they deserve; and

WHEREAS, The success of the Legal Aid Society of New York is in direct correlation to the efforts of its members, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, unbridled enthusiasm, and uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals and organizations of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Legal Aid Society of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Legal Aid Society of New York.