Senate Resolution No. 1827

BY: Senator WEBB

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026, as Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months that are set aside to increase awareness of serious illnesses that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026, as Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder (NMOSD), is an autoimmune inflammatory disease of the central nervous system that primarily targets the optic nerves, spinal cord, and sometimes the brainstem; and

WHEREAS, NMOSD was once thought to be a form of multiple sclerosis (MS), but research has clearly established it as a distinct clinical entity with a unique immunologic profile; and

WHEREAS, NMOSD occurs when the body's immune system attacks its own cells, sometimes causing permanent disabilities including blindness and paralysis; and

WHEREAS, Experts now recognize that NMOSD attacks occur when the immune system mistakenly targets components of the nervous system, most commonly aquaporin-4 (AQP4) antibodies, which are detected in the majority of cases; and

WHEREAS, The hallmark features of NMOSD include: Optic neuritis (ON), an inflammation of the optic nerve leading to eye pain, blurred vision, or severe vision loss, Transverse Myelitis, an inflammation across segments of the spinal cord that can cause weakness, paralysis, sensory loss, and bladder/bowel dysfunction, brainstem symptoms such as nausea, intractable vomiting or hiccups in some patients, and neuropathic pain, spasms, and chronic pain syndromes can also persist long after initial attacks; and

WHEREAS, NMOSD cannot currently be cured, but targeted immunotherapies and preventive strategies have transformed outcomes, and acute attacks are often treated with high-dose corticosteroids (like IV methylprednisolone) and plasma exchange to limit inflammation; and

WHEREAS, As awareness about NMOSD increases, so does its diagnosis rate; doctors have become more likely to recognize the varying manifestations of the disease; and

WHEREAS, Raising awareness among clinicians and patients helps to shorten the time to accurately diagnose NMOSD, guide appropriate antibody testing and imaging, optimize early treatment to prevent irreversible disability, and improve long-term quality of life through tailored care plans; and

WHEREAS, The NMOSD community is dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding of this disease in order to promote research, improve patient care and outcomes, and ultimately find a cure; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026, as Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month in the State of New York; 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.