Senate Resolution No. 1863

BY: Senator BORRELLO

HONORING Robin Kestler upon the occasion of her designation as the 2026 New York State Direct Support Professional of the Year by ANCOR

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend individuals whose professional achievements and personal dedication contribute significantly to the well-being of the citizens of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and fully in accord with its longstanding traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Robin Kestler upon the occasion of her designation as the 2026 New York State Direct Support Professional of the Year by ANCOR; and

WHEREAS, ANCOR, a leading national association dedicated to advancing the future of supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, has selected 57 outstanding professionals nationwide as members of its 2026 class of Direct Support Professional of the Year Award recipients, recognizing excellence, compassion, and commitment in the field; and

WHEREAS, Robin Kestler is most deserving of such recognition for her extraordinary commitment to supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Robin Kestler devoted 30 years of exemplary service as a Direct Support Professional at The Resource Center in Jamestown, New York, where she also served in a leadership capacity as a Lead Direct Support Professional, earning the admiration of colleagues who fondly referred to her as "The Legend" for her compassion, leadership, and unwavering dedication; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her distinguished career, Robin Kestler developed innovative, person-centered approaches that empowered individuals to explore their interests, build independence, and engage meaningfully within their communities; and

WHEREAS, Her work extended far beyond her professional responsibilities, exemplified by her tireless advocacy for those in her care, including making daily hospital visits and modifying her own home to ensure the well-being, comfort, and dignity of individuals she supported; and

WHEREAS, Robin Kestler fostered strong connections between her program and the broader community, contributing to initiatives such as GROW Jamestown and organizing partnerships, community garden efforts, and inclusive events that brought people together and promoted understanding and belonging; and

WHEREAS, Her legacy of compassion and service also includes more

than 25 years of providing care to individuals in her own residence, as well as creating cherished traditions such as "Willie-Fest," a joyful annual celebration that brought happiness and connection to many; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of her outstanding advocacy, Robin Kestler was previously honored with the Henry Wesley Advocate of the Year Award in 2005 through The Resource Center's Ability Awareness Awards; and

WHEREAS, After three decades of dedicated service, Robin Kestler retired, leaving behind an enduring legacy of kindness, innovation, and profound impact on the lives of countless individuals and families; and

WHEREAS, Her designation as New York State Direct Support Professional of the Year by ANCOR stands as a testament to her decades of dedication, her extraordinary compassion, and her immeasurable contributions to the field of developmental disabilities services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Robin Kestler upon the occasion of her designation as the 2026 New York State Direct Support Professional of the Year by ANCOR; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Robin Kestler.