

BY: Senator BRISPORT

RECOGNIZING the profound mental health impacts of incarceration on individuals, families, and communities, in conjunction with the observance of Mental Health Awareness Month

WHEREAS, The State of New York is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all its residents; and

WHEREAS, Mental health is an essential component of overall health, affecting individuals' ability to lead fulfilling lives, maintain relationships, and contribute to their communities; and

WHEREAS, Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed each May since 1949 to increase public understanding of mental health conditions and to reduce stigma surrounding mental illness; and

WHEREAS, Millions of Americans experience mental health conditions each year, and access to culturally competent, trauma-informed care remains uneven and insufficient; and

WHEREAS, Incarceration has been shown to have severe and lasting psychological effects, including increased rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and other mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, Isolation, exposure to violence, family separation, uncertainty, and restricted access to adequate healthcare can exacerbate existing mental health conditions and contribute to new ones; and

WHEREAS, Solitary confinement and prolonged isolation in particular have been widely documented to cause significant psychological harm; and

WHEREAS, The mental health impacts of incarceration extend beyond those directly incarcerated, affecting families, children, and communities, and contributing to cycles of trauma and instability; and

WHEREAS, Formerly incarcerated individuals often face significant barriers to accessing mental health care upon reentry, including stigma, lack of insurance coverage, and limited continuity of care; and

WHEREAS, Addressing the mental health consequences of incarceration is essential to advancing public health, reducing recidivism, and promoting successful reintegration; and

WHEREAS, New York State has an ongoing responsibility to ensure humane conditions of confinement, expand access to mental health services, and invest in alternatives to incarceration that prioritize treatment and support; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body recognizes the significant mental health trauma associated with incarceration and calls for

increased awareness, research, and policy responses to address these harms, in conjunction with the observance of Mental Health Awareness Month; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body supports efforts to expand access to comprehensive, trauma-informed mental health services for currently and formerly incarcerated individuals; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body encourages the development and implementation of alternatives to incarceration that prioritize mental health treatment, rehabilitation, and community-based support; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Silent Cry, Inc.