

Senate Resolution No. 2209

**BY:** Senator PARKER

**RECOGNIZING** May 2026, as Water Safety Month in the State of New York

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize matters of vital public health importance and to encourage the citizens of this great State to take meaningful action to protect the lives and well-being of their families and communities; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to recognize May 2026, as Water Safety Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Water Safety Month; and

**WHEREAS,** Water Safety Month is an annual awareness campaign led by the YMCA with support from the American Red Cross, National Drowning Prevention Alliance, National Recreation and Park Association, and World Waterpark Association, and is observed each year during the month of May; and

**WHEREAS,** Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children ages one to fourteen years, and every day approximately ten people die from unintentional drowning, of whom two are children aged fourteen or younger; and

**WHEREAS,** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2024 Vital Signs report on drowning death rates in the United States (MMWR, Vol. 73), drowning deaths among Black people increased by 28 percent between 2019 and 2021, representing an alarming and unacceptable trend demanding urgent public health attention; and

**WHEREAS,** Drowning death rates for Indigenous or Inuit people under age 30 are two times higher than the rates for White people, with the highest disparities among Indigenous or Inuit people ages 25 to 29, whose rates are 3.5 times higher than White individuals of the same age; and

**WHEREAS,** Drowning death rates for Black people under age 30 are 1.5 times higher than the rates for White people, with disparities highest among Black children ages 5 to 9, whose rates are 2.6 times higher, and ages 10 to 14, whose rates are 3.6 times higher than their White peers; and

**WHEREAS,** In swimming pools specifically, Black children ages 10 to 14 drown at rates 7.6 times higher than White children, a staggering disparity rooted in historical inequities in access to swimming instruction and aquatic facilities; and

**WHEREAS,** These racial and ethnic disparities are influenced by complex historical, structural, environmental, cultural, and social factors, and can be addressed through state and municipal funding to

build and maintain public pools and through community-based programs providing free or low-cost swimming lessons, developing culturally appropriate water safety programs, and hiring diverse aquatic staff; and

**WHEREAS,** There are over 7,400 public swimming pools and 1,300 public bathing beaches operated in New York State, and millions of patrons visit these bathing facilities each year, making water safety education a matter of urgent statewide concern; and

**WHEREAS,** Approximately 750 children drown each year nationally, and 375 of those drownings occur within 25 yards of a parent or other adult, underscoring the critical need for vigilance and education among caregivers; and

**WHEREAS,** Drowning can be significantly prevented through proven interventions including swimming lessons, pool barriers and fencing, active adult supervision, CPR training, and the use of approved life jackets; and

**WHEREAS,** Organizations such as the YMCA promote a layered approach to drowning prevention, and programs like the "Y splash" initiative, campaigns such as phone down eyes up, emphasis for families to be attentive "water watchers," and Pool Safety educational materials are available to help New York families stay safe in and around the water; and

**WHEREAS,** Water Safety Month provides an important opportunity for schools, municipalities, community organizations, health departments, and families across New York State to renew their commitment to water safety education and drowning prevention; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to recognize May 2026, as Water Safety Month in the State of New York; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body urges all New Yorkers; parents, caregivers, educators, pool operators, and community leaders, to take active steps during this month and throughout the year to promote water safety, support swimming education, and work to eliminate the tragedy of preventable drowning; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the YMCA, the American Red Cross, the New York State Department of Health, and the National Drowning Prevention Alliance.