

**BY:** Senator PARKER

**RECOGNIZING** May 2026, as Foster Care Month in the State of New York, and honoring the foster parents, families, case workers, and advocates who serve the children of this State with devotion and care

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and celebrate those observances that call our attention to the needs of the most vulnerable members of our communities, and to honor those who answer the call to provide care, stability, and love for children who cannot remain in their birth homes; and

**WHEREAS,** This Legislative Body is justly proud to recognize May 2026, as Foster Care Month in the State of New York, joining communities across the Nation in honoring the foster parents, families, caseworkers, and advocates whose daily commitment to the welfare of children in care reflects the very best of civic responsibility and human compassion; and

**WHEREAS,** National Foster Care Month was established in 1988 when President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation designating May as a time to recognize and honor foster parents and families, following the initiative of the National Foster Parent Association, which recognized the need for a national campaign to bring attention to the issues facing foster children and families and to promote greater support for the child welfare system; since that first proclamation, every President of the United States has issued an annual proclamation in recognition of National Foster Care Month, affirming the Nation's ongoing commitment to the children who depend upon this system; and

**WHEREAS,** The United States Children's Bureau, the federal agency charged with oversight of child welfare, foster care, and adoption, was founded in 1912, when President William Howard Taft signed into law the bill that created it, following years of grassroots advocacy by social reformers Lillian Wald and Florence Kelley; and the Social Security Act of 1935 provided federal funding for child welfare services for the first time, laying the foundation for the modern foster care system that serves hundreds of thousands of children across the country today; and

**WHEREAS,** According to the most recent data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, there are approximately 331,747 children in the United States foster care system, each one a child whose circumstances have required the intervention of the State and the generosity of families and caregivers willing to open their homes; and

**WHEREAS,** In New York State, the rate of children in foster care was 1.2 per 1,000 children in 2022, a significant decline from 2.3 per 1,000 in 2005, reflecting the impact of expanded community-based preventive services and a sustained commitment to keeping families together wherever safely possible; in New York City, the number of children in the foster care system reached a historic low of approximately 7,200 as

of 2022, with the proportion of children placed with kinship caregivers - relatives, close family friends, and others already in a child's life - increasing from 31 percent in 2018 to 43 percent in 2021, reflecting research showing that children in foster care fare best when placed with those who already know and love them; and

**WHEREAS,** Behind every statistic is a child: a child who has experienced loss, disruption, or harm through no fault of their own; a child who deserves safety, stability, and the knowledge that someone in this world believes in their future; Foster Care Month is an occasion not only to honor those who serve these children but to recommit this Legislative Body to the policies, investments, and systemic reforms that every child in care deserves; and

**WHEREAS,** The foster parents, kinship caregivers, adoptive families, caseworkers, attorneys, judges, advocates, and child welfare professionals who dedicate themselves to the children of New York's foster care system do work that is among the most difficult and most essential in our civic life, and they deserve the recognition, support, and resources that will enable them to continue; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to recognize May 2026, as Foster Care Month in the State of New York, and to extend heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to every foster parent, kinship caregiver, caseworker, advocate, and child welfare professional who shows up every day for the children of this State; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and to child welfare organizations across the State of New York as an expression of this Legislative Body's commitment to the safety, stability, and wellbeing of every child in foster care.