

BY: Senator STEWART-COUSINS

CELEBRATING Senator Michael N. Gianaris upon the occasion of his designation as the recipient of the President Pro Tempore and Senate Majority Leader's Legislative Legacy Award

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize those esteemed public servants whose careers have been marked by an abiding dedication to justice, fairness, and the betterment of their communities; among them stands Senator Michael N. Gianaris, a public servant whose presence did far more than fill a seat, and who has left an indelible impact on the very character of the institution he helped lead; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gianaris was born and raised in Astoria, Queens, the proud son of Greek immigrants whose values of hard work and civic responsibility shaped his life's calling; he graduated summa cum laude from Fordham University and earned his Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, preparing him for a long and accomplished career in public service; and

WHEREAS, Before his election to public office, he built a distinguished record of public service through multiple roles across government, serving as an aide to Congressman Thomas Manton, as Queens Regional Representative to Governor Mario Cuomo, and as a Counsel to the Speaker of the New York State Assembly; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, he was elected to the New York State Assembly, becoming the first Greek-American ever elected to public office from New York City, a milestone that reflects both his heritage and the deep trust placed in him by the communities he has long served; in the Assembly, he championed consumer protection, environmental protection, government reform, and public safety; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gianaris was elected to the New York State Senate in 2010 to represent the 12th Senate District which includes the Queens neighborhoods of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Astoria and parts of other neighborhoods in western Queens; during his 16-year tenure, he became one of the most influential voices in the chamber, rising to Deputy Majority Leader upon appointment by Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins, and building an impressive legislative record defined by meaningful protections and bold reforms grounded in justice, fairness, and accountability; and

WHEREAS, A leading champion for tenants and housing justice, he helped pass the 2019 rent reforms with the HSTPA, authored the Housing Our Neighbors With Dignity Act to convert distressed properties into supportive housing, and helped usher in Good Cause Eviction protections; he worked to transform New York's criminal justice system by writing legislation to eliminate cash bail, creating an Innocence Commission, and advancing reforms to "ban discriminatory citizens' arrests and

protect habeas corpus rights"; he spearheaded sweeping election reforms to strengthen access and participation in the electoral process, including expanding voter registration, enacting early voting and vote by mail, championing automatic voter registration, consolidating primaries, and advancing redistricting reforms to ensure fairer representation for all New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gianaris authored and championed numerous other consequential laws, including fighting for and helping to advance LGBTQ+ rights, securing record funding for mass transit, pushing for increased accessibility through the free bus pilot program; authoring the NY HERO Act to protect workers during the COVID 19 pandemic; challenging polluting power plants, ensuring utility employees received a prevailing wage; strengthening consumer protections through the nation's first Airline Passenger Bill of Rights, and advancing major animal welfare legislation like the Puppy Mill Pipeline Act; he also led the successful opposition to the proposed Amazon HQ2 project in Long Island City; his career has been defined not only by legislative victories but by fierce advocacy for working families, tenants, immigrants, consumers, and all those who rely on government to stand up for them; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gianaris is widely regarded not only as one of the sharpest minds in New York State politics but as a strategist whose instincts are the stuff of Capitol legend; he is known for his ability to read a room instantly, anticipate political shifts before anyone else senses it, and navigate complex negotiations with precision and patience; it is a combination that has made him a trusted leader, a steady hand in moments of uncertainty, and a force whose presence can change the entire temperature of the chamber; and

WHEREAS, He is known to be an exceptional Floor Leader and debater; his command of policy, quick wit, and ability to "verbally spar" when necessary, while still remaining deeply likable and poised, make him both a formidable opponent and a respected colleague; members on both sides of the aisle admire his intelligence, integrity, meticulous preparation, humor, and his legendary talent for remembering exactly what someone said three years ago and deploying it gracefully, devastatingly, and usually to great comedic effect during debate; and

WHEREAS, Beyond his public achievements, Senator Gianaris is a devoted husband, father, son, and brother; his colleagues know him as someone who loves cats and his dog Fred, and for whom devotion to the New York Mets and enthusiasm for Star Wars are unmistakable parts of who he is, infusing even the most serious legislative moments with levity and humor; his humor has long served as a reminder that even in the most serious moments, public service can still make room for joy, imagination, and laughter; and

WHEREAS, Within these halls, he has not only been a colleague but a mentor, guiding, shaping new talent, and elevating many of the great voices who have served in the New York State Legislature; and

WHEREAS, After more than a quarter century of public service, Senator Gianaris has chosen to end his storied tenure in Albany to

return home to his beloved Queens and embrace his most cherished role as a devoted husband, father, and son; as he retires from the New York State Senate, he leaves behind a legacy of courage, conviction, transformative leadership, and a lifelong commitment to lifting up those most in need, a legacy that will continue to shape New York for generations to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Senator Michael N. Gianaris upon the occasion of his designation as the recipient of the President Pro Tempore and Senate Majority Leader's Legislative Legacy Award, and to express its deepest gratitude for his decades of service, his legislative achievements, and his unwavering dedication to the people of Queens and the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Senator Michael N. Gianaris with the highest esteem and appreciation of this Legislative Body. May the Force be with you.