

BY: Senator O'MARA

COMMEMORATING the 10th Anniversary of Corning
Rugby Club

WHEREAS, Athletic competition enhances the moral and physical development of the residents of this State, instilling in them the value of teamwork, encouraging a standard of healthy living, imparting a desire for success, and developing a sense of fair play and competition; and

WHEREAS, Corning Rugby Club was founded in February 2016, by Corning-Painted Post High School student Jack Kahabka, Head Coach Robert McGee, and a host of volunteer coaches and supporters as the first youth rugby program in the Southern Tier of New York; and

WHEREAS, Corning Rugby Club operates as a nonprofit organization and is supported entirely through member dues, fundraising efforts, and community support; and

WHEREAS, Beginning as a single boys high school team competing in RugbyNY Division II, Corning Rugby Club was built around the mission of providing local student-athletes with opportunities to participate in the sport while emphasizing teamwork, leadership, discipline, respect, accountability, and service to the community, and has since grown to include a girls high school team; and

WHEREAS, Through hard work, unwavering commitment, and strong spirit, the inaugural boys team quickly established itself as a competitive force in New York State rugby, earning a berth in the RugbyNY Division II State Playoffs - an impressive accomplishment for a first-year club; and

WHEREAS, Corning Rugby Club has continued to be a competitive force over its 10 seasons, with its high school boys team qualifying for the RugbyNY state playoffs in every season-the only team in Upstate New York to accomplish that feat during the time period; and

WHEREAS, With the addition of a girls team in 2017, Corning Rugby Club created the first opportunities in the region for female student athletes to compete in the sport; the program has grown rapidly in popularity, becoming one of the premier programs in New York State and the East Coast; and

WHEREAS, Corning Rugby has engaged nearly 300 student athletes across its boys, girls, and middle school programs during its first decade, providing meaningful athletic opportunities, skill development, and leadership experiences to youth throughout the Southern Tier; and

WHEREAS, The Corning Rugby Club's girls program captured the RugbyNY High School Girls State Championship in 2023 and 2025, and the boys program earned third-place finishes at the RugbyNY State Championships

in 2017, 2019, 2022; this tradition of success is a testament to the club's commitment to high-level athletic performance; and

WHEREAS, The Corning Rugby Girls program was invited to join the prestigious Elite Girls Rugby League (EGRL), providing student athletes with opportunities to compete against many of the top girls rugby programs on the East Coast; and

WHEREAS, Corning Rugby alumni have earned selection to prestigious national development programs, including representation of the United States as members of the USA U-20 Women's National Team and participation in the Eagle Impact Rugby Academy, part of the official USA Rugby national development pathway; and

WHEREAS, The athletes involved with Corning Rugby Club have had invaluable opportunities to train and compete at national and international levels, and participate in the tradition of touring, organizing and competing in out-of-state matches across the United States; and

WHEREAS, In addition to high school rugby, the Corning Rugby Club has continued expanding opportunities for younger athletes through middle school and youth development programming; in 2026, the club launched a free youth non-contact rugby program for boys and girls ages 7-15 in an effort to continue growing participation and introducing the sport to the next generation of athletes; and

WHEREAS, Corning Rugby has brought together student-athletes from more than 10 school districts throughout the Southern Tier region, creating a unique community-based athletic program that unites players from diverse backgrounds through teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, and shared commitment to the values of rugby, and deserves the just recognition and applause of the citizens of this great State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of Corning Rugby Club; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Jack Kahabka and Robert McGee, founders of Corning Rugby Club.