

Senate Resolution No. 2362

**BY:** Senator ASHBY

**COMMENDING** Aimal Zafari upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

**WHEREAS,** Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

**WHEREAS,** This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Aimal Zafari upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

**WHEREAS,** The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

**WHEREAS,** Born in Afghanistan and now a proud resident of the Town of Colonie, New York, Aimal Zafari has demonstrated extraordinary valor, resilience, and devotion to the cause of liberty and human dignity; and

**WHEREAS,** From 2012 through 2016, Aimal Zafari served alongside United States military forces as an Afghan cultural advisor and translator, conducting more than 1,000 military combat missions in some of the most dangerous regions of Afghanistan; and

**WHEREAS,** In this vital role, he worked closely with senior United States and Afghan military leaders, Afghan government officials, Afghan police chiefs, and local non-profit organizations to improve security and foster stability in regions plagued by violence and unrest; and

**WHEREAS,** Through his cultural expertise, wisdom, and unwavering professionalism, Aimal Zafari helped United States military personnel navigate complex cross-cultural environments, enabling more effective engagement with local communities and strengthening relationships essential to mission success; and

**WHEREAS,** Aimal Zafari's outstanding service and steadfast commitment earned him Certificates of Appreciation from nine separate United States military units, reflecting the deep respect and admiration of those with whom he served; and

**WHEREAS,** In December of 2016, while serving on mission with the United States Marine Corps, Aimal Zafari was shot and severely wounded, sustaining a T-6 spinal cord injury that left him permanently paraplegic and confined to a wheelchair, injuries from which he continues to suffer each day; and

**WHEREAS,** Despite enduring life-altering injuries in service to the United States and its allies, Aimal Zafari has faced adversity with remarkable courage, dignity, and perseverance, embodying the very spirit of sacrifice and selflessness; and

**WHEREAS,** Though not formally enlisted as a member of the United States military, Aimal Zafari faithfully served alongside American service members in combat, risking his life to protect countless others and contributing immeasurably to the safety and success of coalition missions; and

**WHEREAS,** This Nation and the State of New York owe a profound debt of gratitude to Aimal Zafari for the countless lives he helped save and for the extraordinary sacrifices he made in defense of freedom and democracy; and

**WHEREAS,** On December 1, 2023, Aimal Zafari was officially presented with his United States citizenship, a deeply meaningful milestone that reflects both his enduring commitment to this Nation and the gratitude owed to him by the American people; and

**WHEREAS,** The courage, patriotism, and resilience demonstrated by Aimal Zafari stand as an inspiration to all New Yorkers and all Americans, reminding us of the profound impact one individual can have through selfless service to others; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Aimal Zafari upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Aimal Zafari.