Assembly Resolution No. 1138

BY: M. of A. McDonald

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 2026 as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months dedicated to raising awareness of serious conditions impacting the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long- standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 2026 as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Spina Bifida Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Spina bifida, which occurs when the spinal column of the baby fails to form or close properly in the first month of pregnancy resulting in damage to the spinal column, is the most common permanently disabling birth defect compatible with life in the United States; an average of eight babies every day are born with spina bifida or a similar defect of the brain and spine; and

WHEREAS, Spina bifida happens when the spinal column and brain, or neural tube, is formed; the openings, or lesions, in the spinal column end up causing damage in the spinal column and result in some degree of paralysis; and

WHEREAS, There are many New Yorkers living with spina bifida for whom health and support services are critical to their well-being and improving their quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Children born with spina bifida have medical expenditures that are 13 times higher than those of the average child without spina bifida; adults with spina bifida have average medical expenditures that are three to six times greater than those of adults without spina bifida; and

WHEREAS, The average total lifetime cost to society for many infants born with spina bifida may well exceed one million dollars; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that taking folic acid decreases the risk for neural tube defects during pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, Folic acid education can help women of child-bearing age understand the benefits of taking a daily multivitamin to reduce the risk of neural tube defects; experts recommend all women of child-bearing age in the United States consume 400 micrograms of folic acid per day; and

WHEREAS, The prevalence of spina bifida among children from birth to 11 years of age declined by 1.4% annually from 1991 to 2002, with a

consistent reduction each year due to folic acid fortification of the food supply; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York, to raise awareness regarding the challenges of living with spina bifida; it is the hope that this month of awareness will also remind all New Yorkers that people with spina bifida are not defined by their condition, they are people with careers, families, and children, just like so many people without spina bifida; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 2026 as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and the Spina Bifida Association of New York State.