Assembly Resolution No. 1239

BY: M. of A. McMahon

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2, 2026, as Polonia Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations which foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities 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 May 2, 2026, as Polonia Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Polonia Day, also referred to as Polish National Flag Day, is a Polish national holiday which is celebrated by Polish communities throughout the world; in addition to honoring the Polish flag, Polonia Day serves to observe the Polish diaspora and celebrate all Poles living abroad; and

WHEREAS, Adopted on August 1, 1919, the Polish flag is a simple two striped white and red banner, which represents the rich history of the country and evokes hope and promises for the future; and

WHEREAS, On February 20, 2004, the Senate of the Republic of Poland established National Flag Day of the Republic of Poland; the date of May 2nd was chosen since it was the day when Poles had a moment of reflection on Polish history, to fill in the free day between two national holidays, and to underline celebration of the Day of Polonia and Poles Abroad; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of Polonia Day, various types of patriotic actions and demonstrations are held in Poland and throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Western New York is home to one of the largest Polish communities in the Nation and by commemorating this holiday, New York State can honor the rich heritage and culture of the state's population; and

WHEREAS, The Polish influence in Western New York can be traced back to Pieter Stadnitski, one of the partners of the Holland Land Office Company; and

WHEREAS, During the 1850s-1860s, Poles of Jewish heritage, followed by Catholic Poles, began to arrive in Buffalo, New York, many of whom were escaping political oppression and poverty in Germany, Austria, and Russia, as there was no formal nation of Poland at this time; and

WHEREAS, The 1870 Census indicated 150 natives of Poland lived in

Buffalo, and three years later, St. Stanislaus Roman Catholic Church, Buffalo's first Polish church, was founded; between 1873 and 1922,

Polish Americans established 34 church parishes in Greater Buffalo and Western New York as a whole; and

WHEREAS, By 1886, 1,100 houses had been built for Polish immigrants on a large tract of land in what is now the Broadway-Fillmore district, and soon after, an open-air market was established, quickly becoming a community meeting place; and

WHEREAS, At the turn of the century, approximately 20,000 Polish-Americans lived in Buffalo, with business and culture flourishing; and

WHEREAS, In 1910, 80,000 Poles formed roughly one sixth of Buffalo's population, and there were 800 Polish-owned businesses in what was then called East Buffalo; in 1923, there were 181,300 Polish-Americans in Buffalo, most of whom still spoke Polish; and

WHEREAS, Polish-Americans became the largest ethnic group in Erie County by 1971, comprising 75 percent of Cheektowaga, New York's population; by 2014, most Polish-Americans had moved to the Eastern suburbs of Cheektowaga, Marilla, and others; and

WHEREAS, Today, Poles continue to take great pride in their nation's flag, which represents their many triumphs; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to urge the citizens of New York State to join those of Polish backgrounds as they rejoice in the accomplishments of their ancestors by memorializing May 2, 2026, as Polonia Day or Polish National Flag Day; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2, 2026, as Polonia Day 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 various Polish-American organizations throughout the State of New York.