

Assembly Resolution No. 1561

**BY:** M. of A. Rules (Buttenschon)

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim October 2026, as Disability Employment Awareness Month in the State of New York

**WHEREAS,** It is the conviction of this Legislative Body that those individuals who faithfully serve the needs of the community and its citizens with steadfast dedication and compassionate commitment profoundly strengthen our shared commitment to family and community life; and

**WHEREAS,** It is, furthermore, the practice of this Legislative Body to recognize the efforts of essential employees with disabilities who, in providing vital care and support to people in the communities across New York State, serve to enhance the quality of life for our residents; 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 Disability Employment Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month; and

**WHEREAS,** The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate and raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS,** The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month; and

**WHEREAS,** The State of New York has recognized the importance of these workers by passing laws which support hiring individuals with disabilities; Executive Order No. 136, signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo on September 17, 2014, establishes New York as an Employment First State; and

**WHEREAS,** Workplaces welcoming of the talents of all people, including people with disabilities, are a critical part of our efforts to build an inclusive community and strong economy; and

**WHEREAS**, Activities during this month will reinforce the value and talent people with disabilities add to our workplaces and communities and affirm New York State's commitment to an inclusive community that increases access and opportunities to all, including individuals with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, Essential workers with disabilities have played an important role in keeping New Yorkers safe and healthy, including during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, Many essential employees with disabilities work through disability job placement service providers which provide training, job coaching and other needed supports to help individuals perform essential work; and

**WHEREAS**, Preferred Source contracts for essential services arise under New York State and local government programs which are intended to provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, The essential work performed during the COVID-19 pandemic includes work done in supermarkets, grocery stores and other food service establishments; manufacturing and delivery of thousands of critical products needed by New Yorkers, especially during the pandemic, including personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, cleaning products, disinfectants, first aid kits, examination gloves, face shields and bathroom tissue; and

**WHEREAS**, Additional work includes janitorial and maintenance work providing deep-cleaning and disinfecting services essential to locations such as hospitals, government buildings, transportation hubs and vehicles, other locations where first responders and essential workers perform, and stepping up custodial efforts to address known COVID-19 incident locations; pharmacies; homeless shelters; nursing homes; warehouses; messenger work; and numerous other professions and locations; and

**WHEREAS**, The essential employees with disabilities who perform these jobs play a central and invaluable role in protecting New York and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, Essential employees with disabilities have continued to perform their regular duties and more throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; these individuals are vital to the economy of New York State, were essential before the COVID-19 pandemic, and will continue to be essential after the COVID-19 pandemic has passed into history; and

**WHEREAS**, These jobs provide greater independence for people with disabilities who become tax-paying contributors to the economy and which are vital to the economic security and personal fulfillment of the individuals who perform them; and

**WHEREAS**, While others are safely under quarantine, these loyal and dependable public servants continue to provide essential services to the residents of New York State; and

**WHEREAS,** Employers, as well as New Yorkers across the State, should celebrate essential employees with disabilities by taking a moment to say thank you to those workers in their community; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the quality of life in their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to the maintenance of high standards in their profession certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

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

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.