Assembly Resolution No. 923

BY: M. of A. Fall

COMMEMORATING the 18th Anniversary of Kosovo's Independence

WHEREAS, Kosovo Independence Day is a national holiday observed annually every February 17th, in commemoration of the declaration of the Balkan nation's independence in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Kosovo, as the second-youngest country in Southeastern Europe, on February 17, 2008, made a declaration of Independence from Serbia following a deadly war which lasted from March 5, 1998, to June 11, 1999; and

WHEREAS, The conflict came to a halt following the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) intervention by airstrikes in March 1999; Yugoslav forces then withdrew from Kosovo; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Kosovo, which derives its name from the Serbian region "field of the blackbirds," a former province in Serbia, is majorly described as an ethnic Albanian territory; and

WHEREAS, Present-day Kosovo traces its origin to Dardania, forming an independent polity known as the Kingdom of Dardania (fourth century B.C.); and

WHEREAS, Since its independence, Kosovo citizens are rightly proud of the progress Kosovo has made in promoting and advancing democratic values and strengthening institutions to deliver good governance, rule of law, and economic opportunity for all Kosovans; and

WHEREAS, The agreement proposed under the EU-facilitated Dialogue will advance Kosovo toward greater regional stability and European and Euro- Atlantic integration; and

WHEREAS, To this day, the enduring partnership between the United States and Kosovo is rooted in the mutual understanding, values, and friendship between our countries; normalization of relations with Serbia, centered on eventual mutual recognition, remains essential to peace and prosperity in this region of the world; and

WHEREAS, Kosovars in New York, having arrived both pre and post Kosovo's independence, have significantly contributed to the cultural diversity and economic vitality of the State, enriching its social fabric through their unique heritage, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to community development; and

WHEREAS, The presence of the Kosovar community in New York has fostered deeper bilateral ties, promoting mutual understanding and cooperation between Kosovo and the United States, and has played a pivotal role in advocating for Kosovo's interests and recognition on the international stage; and

WHEREAS, It is with immense pleasure that this Legislative Body acknowledges and congratulates the people of Kosovo, our friend, partner, and ally, on this significant day of independence, recognizing their achievements and supporting their future endeavors; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pauses in its deliberations to commemorate the 18th Anniversary of Kosovo's independence, celebrating its past, acknowledging its present, and looking forward with optimism to its future.