

2023-J1072

Senate Resolution No. 1072

BY: Senator CLEARE

MOURNING the death of former New York State Senator Bill Perkins, dedicated political leader and strong advocate for the people of this great Empire State

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body, representing the people of the State of New York, is moved this day to pay tribute to an eminent gentleman of indomitable faith and dedication whose public service and countless accomplishments will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Bill Perkins, noting the significance of the loss of a man whose altruistic spirit will be greatly missed; and

WHEREAS, Bill Perkins, a true champion of his beloved lifelong community of Harlem, New York, died on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at the age of 74; and

WHEREAS, Born April 18, 1949, Bill Perkins was raised by his mother together with his two brothers and a cousin; while she did not have much to give him financially, she fought to get him into good schools and instilled him the importance of an education; and

WHEREAS, As a youth, Bill Perkins worked hard and was awarded a scholarship to Collegiate Preparatory School in Manhattan and later a scholarship to Brown University; and

WHEREAS, Upon earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Brown University in 1972, Bill Perkins returned to New York and dedicated himself to giving back to his community through public service; and

WHEREAS, After beginning his illustrious political career as a community activist and tenant leader, Bill Perkins represented Harlem as an elected official for 25 years, first in the City Council from 1998 to 2005, before pivoting to representing the neighborhood in the State Senate from 2007 to 2017, and returning to the Council for one more term from 2017 to 2021; and

WHEREAS, As Deputy Majority Leader, Bill Perkins spearheaded the successful fight to protect children from the deadly effects of lead in their homes and his leadership resulted in the enactment of The Childhood Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention Act of 2004; thanks to his efforts, New York has the strongest lead paint prevention law in the country; and

WHEREAS, Elected to the New York State Senate in 2006, Bill Perkins represented the 30th Senatorial District which is part of New York County and encompasses Harlem, the great preponderance of East Harlem, the Upper West Side and Washington Heights; in this capacity, he worked tirelessly to make a real difference, fighting for reform, transparency and accountability, to take on the status quo and the special interests, and to be a voice for fairness, basic justice and the people of his district; and

WHEREAS, A strong advocate of public education, Bill Perkins fought to provide every child equal access to a quality education; he advocated for and allocated funding for computer technology, public libraries, and the rehabilitation of school playgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Bill Perkins helped fight for increased funding for the City University of New York (CUNY) scholarships, full-time staffing, and college preparatory courses; he was one of the leading voices on maintaining the public university's mission of access and excellence; and

WHEREAS, Bill Perkins, recognizing the importance of early cancer detection, was successful in establishing early detection programs, and increasing awareness of colon and other cancers in city hospitals; he also helped safeguard the health of children and adults by fighting against conditions which trigger asthma like pesticide use, diesel buses and rats; and

WHEREAS, In response to a myriad of health concerns within his community, Bill Perkins was the leader in the fight to combat the high rates of infant and maternal mortality, and worked tirelessly on essential issues such as the crusade to end HIV/AIDS, as well as the fight to enact universal, single-payer healthcare in New York State, forever putting "Patients Before Profits"; and

WHEREAS, A strong voice in the fight for civil rights and civil liberties, Bill Perkins introduced the Patriot Act Resolution which mandates anti-terrorism laws and policies be implemented in New York City in a manner which does not infringe on the fundamental rights and liberties of New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Renowned for his tenacious and unyielding commitment to

serving his community, this extraordinary man also opposed racial, ethnic, and religious profiling, and sponsored landmark legislation to protect the rights of gay, lesbian, and transgender communities; he was also instrumental in leading the fight to provide a minimum wage that was also a living wage for all; and

WHEREAS, Bill Perkins is survived by his loving wife, Pamela Green Perkins; and

WHEREAS, A true man of the people who never forgot where he came from, Bill Perkins spent his lifetime fighting for fairness, justice, equity, and improving the lives of those he represented; his legacy will forever serve as a beacon of love for his family, friends, and all who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing man; and

WHEREAS, Every citizen in New York State has most certainly benefited, in one way or another, from the deep dedication, intelligence and commitment Bill Perkins brought to his work as a legislator and public policy-maker; a loyal friend and trusted advisor, he will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of former New York State Senator Bill Perkins, and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Bill Perkins.