

2011-K802

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Merlene Smith-Sotillo for her community outreach, support and many contributions to Sickle Cell Awareness

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Merlene Smith-Sotillo for her community outreach, support and many contributions to Sickle Cell Awareness; and

WHEREAS, Born and raised in the beautiful Island of Trinidad and Tobago West Indies, Merlene Smith-Sotillo always had a special interest in the medical field at a young age; and

WHEREAS, Merlene Smith-Sotillo attended Success Village R C School and later went to Mills High School, where she graduated at the top of her class; continuing her studies, she attended Geans Secretarial School, graduating with a degree in clerical studies; and

WHEREAS, Six months later, Merlene Smith-Sotillo began working at Trinidad Hilton Hotel in the housekeeping department, working there for 15 years; in early 1989, her family migrated to the United States and she began working at McDonald's, advancing to management; and

WHEREAS, Merlene Smith-Sotillo then decided to further her education; she took several night classes at York College, studying for her G.E.D. and taking several courses in the medical field; and

WHEREAS, Having two of her four children have Sickle Cell Disease, she wanted to know as much about this illness as possible; she questioned about cures and types of treatment for the disease; and

WHEREAS, Dealing with situations and the frustration of not being able to get proper treatment and information in her country of Trinidad &

Tobago, Merlene Smith-Sotillo's passion for knowledge and information allowed her the opportunity to get involved with various Sickle Cell organizations in America; and

WHEREAS, In Merlene Smith-Sotillo's quest for treatment options and information, she decided to volunteer at Queens General Hospital which allowed her the opportunity to attend various seminars on the topic of Sickle Cell Disease; while developing her knowledge, she saw the drastic need for education and information on the illness; and

WHEREAS, In August of 2007, Merlene Smith-Sotillo made a decision to bring awareness by starting her own foundation, Sickle Cell Awareness Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit organization; by doing so she began a blood drive, walk and bike-a-thon, health fairs, and a community referral center; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, Merlene Smith-Sotillo learned much from the Sickle Cell Act of 2003 and with this has obtained much needed support; with the help of her community, family, friends, and church members, the Foundation has been a success; and

WHEREAS, Merlene Smith-Sotillo has also supported a variety of civic and charitable organizations, including the Cancer Action Council, NAACP, and the 1199; outside of her professional interests, she is deeply committed to church activities; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to excellence 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 honor Merlene Smith-Sotillo for her community outreach, support and many contributions to Sickle Cell Awareness; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Merlene Smith-Sotillo.