

## 2013-J3750

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Sister Mary Nerney, nationally known advocate for incarcerated women and victims of domestic violence, distinguished citizen and devoted member of her community

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Sister Mary Nerney of East Harlem, New York, died on Wednesday, November 27, 2013, at the age of 75; and

WHEREAS, Sister Mary Nerney was born on June 8, 1938, in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, the daughter of Irish Immigrants; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from St. Jean Baptiste High School in 1956, Mary Nerney began her religious vocation at the Sisters of the Congregation de Notre Dame; she later earned a Bachelor's degree from Catholic Teachers College and a professional diploma in psychology from St. John's University in Queens; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable woman began her life of service to others as a teacher, psychologist and principal at Catholic schools throughout New York City and elsewhere; in the mid-1970s, she started counseling women at the Riker's Island and Bedford Hills correctional facilities; and

WHEREAS, Sister Mary Nerney was one of the first to focus on bringing to light the experiences of incarcerated domestic abuse survivors and the criminal justice system's devastating response to women who protect themselves; she devoted her entire life to fighting injustice, ending family violence, lifting women's voices, and keeping them out of prison; and

WHEREAS, Innumerable women and their families have been helped through

the many programs established during the life of Sister Mary Nerney; she is the founder of STEPS to End Family Violence, the Incarcerated Mothers Program and Greenhope Services for Women; and

WHEREAS, Sister Mary Nerney also helped found the Coalition for Women Prisoners in 1994, and served as co-chair of the Violence Against Women Committee for many years; her fearless advocacy helped move forward legislation that would provide critical relief for domestic violence survivors in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by her parents, Sister Mary Nerney is survived by her sister, Nancy Balboni, and two brothers, Thomas and James; and

WHEREAS, Sister Mary Nerney lived her life based on principles of compassion, integrity, justice, and kindness; her example will continue to serve as an inspiration to those seeking to make the world a more loving and just place; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Sister Mary Nerney, nationally known advocate for incarcerated women and victims of domestic violence, distinguished citizen and devoted member of her community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Sister Mary Nerney.