

2013-J5638

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Liberty DeVitto upon the occasion of his selection as a 2014 Italian-American Day honoree

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to those individuals of true purpose and worthy accomplishment who foster ethnic pride and strive to preserve their cultural heritage, thereby enhancing the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of community throughout this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Liberty DeVitto upon the occasion of his selection as a 2014 Italian-American Day Honoree; and

WHEREAS, Affectionately known as the songwriter's drummer, throughout his illustrious career, Liberty DeVitto has played with Paul McCartney, Stevie Nicks, Mick Jagger, Roger Daltrey, Ronnie Spector, Karen Carpenter, Phoebe Snow, Elton John, Meatloaf, and many more; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, Liberty DeVitto was inducted into The Classic Drummer's Hall of Fame, and for more than 40 years he has been repeatedly featured in articles, documentaries and educational publications, most recently in the documentary "A Matter of Trust: The Bridge to Russia"; and

WHEREAS, Born to Sicilian immigrants, Vincent and Josephine (Sardisco) DeVitto, Liberatori (Liberty) DeVitto was born in Brooklyn, New York, on August 8, 1950, a second generation Italian-American; and

WHEREAS, Life for Liberty DeVitto began in a one room furnished apartment, where his mother would empty a dresser drawer, line it with a baby blanket, and use that for his bed; his Mother says it was the radio on top of the dresser, which she kept on at all times, that gave Liberty his love for music; and

WHEREAS, After Liberty DeVitto's father became a New York City Police Officer in the 77th Precinct in Brooklyn, he decided to join the migration to the suburbs, and moved his new family to Long Island in 1951; and

WHEREAS, On February 9, 1964 Liberty DeVitto's family, like every other family in America, had the TV tuned to the Ed Sullivan show, and there they were, in black and white, "The Beatles"; since that moment, Liberty's life would change, forever; and

WHEREAS, In June of 1968, Liberty DeVitto graduated from Seaford High School, and by November he was on the road with Detroit rocker Mitch Ryder banging out Mitch's hits, "Jenny Takes a Ride," "Devil with a Blue Dress" and "Sock It To Me Baby"; and

WHEREAS, Right after Mitch Ryder, Liberty DeVitto landed a gig with Long Island alumni, Richie Supa, and had his first recording experience; the album, "Supa's Jamboree" was recorded in Atlanta in 1969-70, and was produced by Buddy Buie of the Classics 4 and Atlanta Rhythm Section Fame; and

WHEREAS, The album was released on Paramount Records and a tour immediately followed; during this time, Liberty was driving the band equipment van from Cleveland, Ohio, back home to Long Island when he was involved in an accident, sustaining serious injuries; and

WHEREAS, Subsequently, Liberty DeVitto took a year off from playing the drums; to ease back in, he took a steady gig at a catering hall on Long Island; during those years, the group, "Topper" was formed, and eventually, the group became Billy Joel's band, going on to create such legendary songs as, "Scenes from an Italian Restaurant" and "New York State of Mind"; and

WHEREAS, After 30 years with Billy Joel, and countless other projects, Liberty DeVitto is still going strong; he is proud to have been a part of the 9-11 recovery efforts, visiting Ground Zero and supporting the first responders with Billy Joel a few days after the tragedy and

performing to raise funds to rebuild his city; and

WHEREAS, In addition, he has played for supporters at "The Tunnel to Towers Run" commemorating Stephen Sills' heroic effort to save fellow New Yorkers on September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Today, Liberty DeVitto can be seen live with his Brooklyn, New York based rock and blues band, "The Slim Kings," who are working on their sophomore album, following their successful first album and single, "Waterloo," which was released on charity CD "Songs For Sandy

II" along with releases from Paul McCartney and Dave Stewart; and

WHEREAS, Liberty DeVitto is an Honorary Board Member of Little Kids Rock, a non-profit organization which puts instruments and music programs in underserved public schools worldwide; each year, he is also the house drummer for the yearly LKR Gala, driving the beat for such performers as Bruce Springsteen, Tom Morello, Elvis Costello, and many others; and

WHEREAS, This exemplary man remains a band member for The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, lectures globally for Sticks and Skins, and is a founding member of The NYC Hitsquad; he is also a member of "The Recovery Squad," a band and program dedicated to rock 'n' roll and sober living; and

WHEREAS, Liberty DeVitto resides in Brooklyn with his loving wife, Anna; he continues to lecture, interview and play music all over the world; and

WHEREAS, Liberty DeVitto has truly distinguished himself in his career and community involvement, and the Italian-American community and all of New York State have profited greatly from his talent, dedication, and service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Liberty DeVitto upon the occasion of being selected as a 2014 Italian-American Day Honoree; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Liberty DeVitto.