

2015-J1773

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring the accomplishments and celebrating the life of former New York State Senator George Onorato

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those individuals of distinguished purpose whose lives have been committed to public service and the pursuit of excellence in the conduct of the legislative process in this noble Empire State; and

WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of former New York State Senator George Onorato, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Senator George Onorato, who served western Queens as a member of the New York State Senate from 1983-2010, passed away on Saturday, February 21, 2015, at the age of 86; and

WHEREAS, A life-long resident of Queens, New York, George Onorato was the youngest of five children born to Italian immigrants, Maria Racana and Biagio Onorato, on November 5, 1928; and

WHEREAS, Before graduating from Long Island City High School, George Onorato attended both Public School 84, and Junior High School 141 in Queens; and

WHEREAS, George Onorato proudly served his country as a member of the 118th Medical Battalion in the United States Army from 1950-1952; he was recognized with the prestigious Presidential Citation for his extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy; and

WHEREAS, Upon his honorable discharge from the Military, George Onorato held the position of Secretary/Treasurer of Bricklayer's Local No. 41 for 15 years; and

WHEREAS, In 1983, George Onorato was elected to the esteemed seat of New York State Senator; throughout his legislative career, he was a

strong advocate for New York's working families, consumers, senior citizens, veterans, and young people; as Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Labor, he was able to draw on his extensive experience with organized labor to address the needs of working men and women throughout New York; and

WHEREAS, Senator George Onorato was particularly interested in ensuring better access to health care for all New Yorkers, improving educational opportunities for children and college students in New York City and throughout the State, and spurring job creation, as well as developing more equitable tax policies; and

WHEREAS, An advocate for environmental conservation, Senator George Onorato strived to reform energy laws to ensure adequate power supplies, promote greater air quality protection, and enhance conservation measures; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Senator George Onorato championed efforts to make New York State government operations more open and accountable to the public; and

WHEREAS, Senator George Onorato played a role in shaping many major New York laws that were enacted over his 25 years of service as a member of the Senate Minority leadership team and later as Assistant Majority Leader/Liaison to the Executive Branch; he also was both a past Treasurer and President of the Conference of Italian-American Legislators; and

WHEREAS, Active in his community, Senator George Onorato was instrumental in building an Aquatic center for the Boys and Girls Club in Astoria, New York; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, Senator George Onorato received the distinguished Ellis Island Medal of Honor by fulfilling the American Dream through his

personal accomplishments and dedicated service to his beloved Queens community; and

WHEREAS, The passing of Senator George Onorato, a deeply respected and highly regarded public servant, will be deeply felt in the New York

State Legislature and in the communities he served with such passion and devotion; and

WHEREAS, Senator George Onorato distinguished himself by his sincere dedication and substantial contributions to the welfare of those he so diligently represented for nearly 40 years; his unprecedented record of service to the people of western Queens leaves an enduring legacy that few will surpass, yet many will emulate; and

WHEREAS, Senator George Onorato was a gentleman who was dedicated to his constituency and to the belief that government can be a positive force for improving people's lives; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his first wife Josephine Onorato, and his second wife, Athena Georgakakos, Senator George Onorato is survived by his three children, Joanne, George, and Janice; six grandchildren, Sophia, Anastasia, Joseph, Mia, George, and Louis; and two great-grandchildren, Cameron and Skylar; and

WHEREAS, Loyal friend, trusted advisor and ardent fighter for the causes in which he so strongly believed, the accomplishments of Senator George Onorato are legend; 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 honor the accomplishments and celebrate the life and extraordinary achievements of former Senator George Onorato, recognizing the significance of his exemplary record of public service and dedicating ourselves anew to the causes and people he served; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of former Senator George Onorato.