

## 2015-J2821

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Nunda Fire Department Truck Captain Stephen Gelser upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

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, From time to time, this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, The firefighters of New York State are renowned throughout the Nation; their reputation is synonymous with excellence in the arduous field of fire protection and prevention; and

WHEREAS, Since the early days of "teapot steamers," the volunteer firefighter has been the cornerstone of our great State's efforts to spare us from the ravages of fire; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Nunda Fire Department Truck Captain Stephen Gelser upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, In the early morning hours of Friday, March 27, 2015, members of the Nunda Fire Department were called to the scene of a working

structure fire with entrapment at a home on Parker Road in Nunda, New York; and

WHEREAS, Upon arriving on scene, Chief Rober Walker, First Assistant Chief Travis Rawleigh, First Lieutenant Travis Deiter, and Truck Captain Stephen Gelser discovered three residents pinned down in the house as smoke was quickly engulfing the two-story structure; and

WHEREAS, Due to the heavy smoke, the firefighters were only able to locate the trapped residents because of their screams; and

WHEREAS, The men first climbed a ladder and upon reaching the roof carried a terrified elderly woman to safety, despite her panicked attempts to fight the firefighters rescuing her; and

WHEREAS, Travis Rawleigh and Travis Deiter then quickly scaled the ladder again to the now smoke-covered roof, where they rescued a second trapped woman as the home became engulfed in flames; and

WHEREAS, A third resident, a man, was subsequently rescued from the home's first floor; and

WHEREAS, Travis Rawleigh and Travis Deiter credited teamwork and the rigorous training put in by members of the department as contributing to their preparedness for the situation, as well as the keen guidance provided by Chief Robert Walker and quick actions of pump operator Stephen Gelser; and

WHEREAS, Volunteer firefighters and fire departments not only provide the critical service of fire protection, but also engage in other activities of great benefit and importance to the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, It takes a special dedication, a strong desire to help others and a tireless sense of community to forsake precious time with family and friends to respond to the signal that a neighbor is in need; and

WHEREAS, Nunda Fire Department Truck Captain Stephen Gelser has exemplified the virtues of duty, honor and dedication to his community since he joined the department in 1992; and

WHEREAS, An active member in the department, Stephen Gelser holds the

rank of Truck Captain and is a member of the department's Board of Fire Commissioners; he has previously held the ranks of Captain and Assistant Chief; and

WHEREAS, Observing that special recognition should be given to those who work so assiduously for the betterment of their communities, and that they should be acknowledged publicly for their heroic actions as volunteer firefighters in this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Nunda Fire Department Truck Captain Stephen Gelser upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Truck Captain Stephen Gelser.