

2015-J4931

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 20th Anniversary of Democracy Now! on February 19, 2016

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the quality and character of life in this great Empire State is indelibly enriched by the faithful and untiring efforts of those news programs which have helped shape the history of broadcasting in their area; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of Democracy Now! on Friday, February 19, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Democracy Now! is a daily progressive, non-profit, independently syndicated news hour which airs on more than 1,400 radio, television, satellite and cable TV networks around the globe; the program is funded entirely through contributions from listeners, viewers, and foundations, and does not accept advertisers, corporate underwriting, or government funding; and

WHEREAS, Founded by progressive journalists, Amy Goodman, Juan Gonzalez, Larry Bensky, Salim Muwakkil, and Julie Drizin, Democracy Now! went on air for the first time on the eve of the New Hampshire Primary on February 19, 1996, at WBAI-FM in New York City; the program was originally aired on five Pacifica Radio stations; and

WHEREAS, Amy Goodman serves as the program's principal host, with Juan Gonzalez as frequent co-host; Jeremy Scahill, an investigative reporter for The Nation, has been a frequent contributor since 1997; and

WHEREAS, After they left WBAI Studios, Amy Goodman brought the program to the Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV) located in a converted firehouse building in New York City's Chinatown, where the program began to be televised; and

WHEREAS, In November of 2009, Democracy Now! left their broadcast studio, and moved to a repurposed graphic arts building in the Chelsea District of Manhattan; in 2010, the new 8500-square-foot studio became the first radio or television studio in the Nation to receive LEFD Platinum certification, the highest rating awarded by the United States Green Building Council; and

WHEREAS, Democracy Now! focuses on issues considered underreported or ignored by mainstream news coverage; the program began broadcasting on television every weekday shortly after September 11, 2001; Democracy Now! was the closest national broadcast to Ground Zero, reporting live for eight hours; and

WHEREAS, The program's first 10 to 15 minutes, called the "War and Peace Report", are translated daily into Spanish, and the Democracy Now! Website is also available in the language; and

WHEREAS, Democracy Now! is the flagship program of the Pacifica Radio network which airs simultaneously on satellite, cable television, radio, and the internet; the television simulcast airs on Public-access television stations, by satellite on Free Speech TV and Link TV, and free-to-air on C Band; in addition, the program is on the Internet as downloadable and streaming audio and video; and

WHEREAS, Throughout two decades of service to the public, Democracy Now! and its staff have been the recipients of numerous awards and accolades including the Gracie Award from American Women in Radio and Television, the George Polk Award for its 1998 radio documentary "Drilling and Killing: Chevron and Nigeria's Oil Dictatorship"; in addition, Amy Goodman with Allan Nairn won the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial's First Prize in International Radio for their 1993 report, "Massacre: The Story

of East Timor"; in October 1, 2008, Amy received the 2008 Right Livelihood Award for her years of work establishing Democracy Now!; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, Democracy Now! has interviewed several notable guests such as Alan Dershowitz, Norman G. Finkelstein, Alan

Greenspan, Arundhati Roy, Bill Clinton, and Bill Moyers, as well as
Cornel West; and

WHEREAS, Steeped in a proud and distinguished history, Democracy Now!
can look back with great pride upon its humble beginnings; taking just
satisfaction in its purposeful growth, it will continue its mission,
devoting its talent and unique services to enriching the cultural spirit
of the public it has served so faithfully for 20 years; and

WHEREAS, Democracy Now! has served its community with integrity and
devotion, continuously striving to meet the needs of its listeners
through entertainment and enlightenment; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body would like to extend its highest
commendation to Democracy Now! in recognition of its history of achieve-
ment, innovation and service to its community and the State of New York;
now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to
commemorate the 20th Anniversary of Democracy Now! on February 19, 2016;
and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be tran-
smitted to Democracy Now!.