

2017-J5796

Senate Resolution No. 5796

BY: Senator COMRIE

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 17, 2018, as Black Poetry Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations which foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 17, 2018, as Black Poetry Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Black Poetry Day; and

WHEREAS, Each year, Black Poetry Day is observed on October 17th; Jupiter Hammon, the first African-American poet to publish his own verse, was born on this day in 1711, and lived most of his life in the Lloyd Neck area of Huntington, Long Island; Jupiter was a slave, first to the merchant Henry Lloyd, Lord of the Manor of Queen's Village, and later to Joseph Lloyd, an American patriot who moved to Hartford, Connecticut, during the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS, Jupiter Hammon eventually returned to Lloyd Neck as a slave to Joseph's grandson, John Lloyd; Jupiter learned how to read and was allowed to use his master's library; on Christmas Day of 1760, he published his first poem, "An Evening Thought" at the age of 49; he went on to publish other poems and a number of prose pieces as well; and

WHEREAS, Black Poetry Day was first proposed in 1970, by Stanley A. Ransom of Huntington, who was concerned that there were no celebrations to honor the contributions African Americans have made to American life and culture; when he relocated to Plattsburgh, New York, he brought Black Poetry Day with him; and

WHEREAS, Although it is celebrated all over the state, it has yet to be formally proclaimed a state holiday; Black Poetry Day gives schools the opportunity to encourage African-American students to express their thoughts and feelings through poetry; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of this great Empire State to observe Black Poetry Day, to celebrate the cultural riches New York State has to offer, and to recognize the important role of poetry in creating and sustaining this great nation with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 17, 2018, as Black Poetry Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo.