

2023-J531

Senate Resolution No. 531

BY: Senator BRESLIN

COMMENDING Corporal Robert Dixon posthumously 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, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peace-time, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Corporal Robert Dixon 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; he was nominated for this prestigious award by the Reverend Francis A. Kelley Society which diligently works to honor and care for our local everyday heroes and educate the community about their valorous and sacrificial acts both on and off the battlefield; 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, Corporal Robert Dixon honorably served his country as a member of the United States Army at the United States Military Academy

at West Point during World War II; he was the last living Buffalo Soldier to have taught the Equestrian Arts Course to Army Cadets; and

WHEREAS, Buffalo Soldiers served their country from 1866-1947; their duties included fighting in the Indian wars of the late 1800s, protecting the infrastructure of the West, and fighting in the Spanish-American War, World War I in France, and World War II during the Italian Campaign; and

WHEREAS, Buffalo Soldiers fought fiercely and courageously for their country, followed orders and completed their military missions successfully in spite of enduring racism and discrimination throughout their military and community careers; and

WHEREAS, In honor of their meritorious service, the Buffalo Soldiers Monument was dedicated at West Point in 2021, and Corporal Robert Dixon proudly attended this moving event; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his military service, Robert Dixon returned to New York State, and devoted himself to the Congregational Church in Salt Point, New York, (1946-1976) followed by the Congregational Church in Albany, New York, (1977-2013) where he championed for human and civil rights with the church and the community-at-large; and

WHEREAS, After a man was killed by Albany police on July 8, 1984, Reverend Robert Dixon was asked to join with city and community leaders to form the first Albany Police/Civilian Review Board to investigate the shooting and develop a plan to restore calm and diffuse civil unrest; thanks to the work of the Police/Civilian Review Board and the work of church and community leaders, order was restored, and unrest was

diffused; and

WHEREAS, As a result of Reverend Robert Dixon and his fellow leaders' tireless efforts on the first Police/Civilian Review Board, three major reforms were put into place over the years that would improve relations between the police and the neighborhoods in Albany; these included a mobile crisis unit to accompany the police on calls in which mental illness was suspected or known; the formation of the Center for Law and Justice which through the years has promoted policies to ensure the promotion of a fair and equitable criminal justice system devoted to public safety and social justice; and the adoption of a community policing system based on collaboration between the police and the neighborhoods that make up Albany; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Corporal Robert Dixon demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Corporal Robert Dixon posthumously 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 the family of Corporal Robert Dixon.