

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim Tuesday, March 29, 2016, as Vietnam Veterans' Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have so honorably served this State and Nation, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, Every citizen of this great State and Nation is indebted to those brave individuals who served their country during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of the men and women who served with dignity and honor during this historic time period, let us remember them and thank them for their service; and

WHEREAS, Through more than a decade of combat, over air, land, and sea, these proud Americans upheld the highest traditions of United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam War was fought in the Republic of South Vietnam from 1961 to 1975, and involved North Vietnamese regular forces and Viet Cong guerrilla forces in armed conflict with the United States Armed Forces and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, The United States Armed Forces became involved in Vietnam because the United States Government wanted to provide direct military support to the Government of Vietnam to defend itself against the growing Communist threat from North Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, In 1961, members of the United States Armed Forces began serving in an advisory role to the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam; as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents on August 2, and August 4, 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (Public Law 88-408), on August 7, 1964, which provided authority to the President of the United States to prosecute the way against North Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, the United States Armed Forces ground combat units arrived in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, More than three million servicemen and women left their families to bravely serve a world away in places such as Ia Drang to Khe Sanh, from Hue to Saigon, and countless villages in between; they pushed through jungles and rice paddies, heat and monsoons, fighting to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans; and

WHEREAS, By the end of 1965, there were 80,000 United States troops in Vietnam, and by 1969, a peak of approximately 543,000 troops were reached; an estimated 150,000 New York soldiers served throughout the War; and

WHEREAS, On January 27, 1973, the Treaty of Paris was signed, requiring the release of all United States prisoners-of-war held in North Vietnam and the withdrawal of all United States Armed Forces from South Vietnam; two months later, the last 2,500 troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam thus ending the United States' military involvement in the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, New York was the first state in the Nation to dedicate a Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Albany, New York, recognizing members of the United States Armed Forces who died or were declared missing-in-action in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Beginning on Memorial Day 2012, the federal government began a partnership with local governments, private organizations and communities across the country to participate in the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, a 13-year program to honor and give

thanks to a generation of proud Americans who saw our country through one of the most challenging times; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 90 of the Laws of 2008 designated March 29th of each year as Vietnam Veterans' Day in the State of New York; the chapter designates that date as a day of commemoration to honor those individuals who sacrificed their lives for their country; and

WHEREAS, On May 25, 2012, President Barack Obama declared May 28, 2012, through November 11, 2025, as Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, In addition, March 29, 2016, has been chosen by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to honor our Nation's Veterans; the observance of Vietnam Veterans' Day on this day, is an appropriate way to honor those members of the United States Armed Forces who served in South Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of this great State and Nation, benefactors of the sacrifices and courageous acts of the men and women who served and continue to serve in the United States Armed Forces, remain indebted and are justly proud of the Vietnam veterans from the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to pay tribute to the bravery, patriotism and sacrifice made by the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, both those still living and those who died in service to our great country; and to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim Tuesday, March 29, 2016, as Vietnam Veterans' Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause further to encourage the people of the State of New York to observe Vietnam Veterans' Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that provide the appreciation Vietnam War veterans deserve but did not receive upon returning home from the war; demonstrate the resolve that never again shall the Nation disregard and denigrate a generation of veterans; to promote awareness of the faithful service and contributions of such veterans during their military service as well as to their communities since returning home; to promote awareness of all the importance of entire communities empowering veterans and the families of veterans to readjust to civilian life after military service; and to promote opportunities for such veterans to assist younger veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in rehabilitation from wounds, both seen and unseen, and to support the reintegration of younger veterans into civilian life; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York; John Rowan, President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Ned Foote, President of the Vietnam Veterans of America New York State Council; and Joseph Pollicino, President of Tri-County Council Vietnam Era Veterans.