

RESOLUTION NO. 114

DESIGNATING MARCH 2014 AS “IRISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH” IN ALBANY COUNTY

Introduced: 3/10/14

By Mr. Clenahan and the Albany County Legislature:

WHEREAS, The first Irish emigrants arrived in America as early as 1621, and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans fought for our independence, and their signatures adorn our founding documents - James Smith, George Taylor, Matthew Thornton, and Charles Thomson, four of the individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence, were Irish born and nine other signers were of Irish ancestry, and

WHEREAS, Nine of the generals who served under General Washington during the American Revolution were Irish born, and

WHEREAS, Commodore John Barry of County Wexford, Ireland, served brilliantly in the Continental Navy and is widely regarded as the father of the American Navy, and

WHEREAS, When famine ravaged Ireland in the 1840s and 1850s, many Irish women and men sought a new beginning in the United States, and though they faced poverty and discrimination, these immigrants transformed our cities, served in our Armed Forces, and settled the frontiers of our young Nation, and

WHEREAS, Beginning at the time of the potato blight and famine in Ireland in 1845, over 700,000 Irish immigrants came to the United States during the 1840's, 900,000 during the 1850's, and over 300,000 in each decade through 1910, and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans participated heavily in the industrial and economic development of America during the nineteenth century, building our cities and canals and the railroads that expanded the Nation to the West, and

WHEREAS, The Irish contributed greatly to the development of the labor movement in the United States, including the establishment of the American Miners Association in 1861, and the first woman to serve as the organizer of the American Federation of Labor was Mary Kennedy O'Sullivan, and

WHEREAS, Nearly 150,000 natives of Ireland served in the Union forces during the Civil War, and more than 500 members of the Irish Brigade were killed while fighting for the Union in the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, a

date that has been called the bloodiest day in American history, and the Irish Brigade fought courageously in several other Civil War battles including Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Yorktown, Gaines Mill, Allen's Farm, Savage Station, White Oak Bridge, Glendale, Malvern Hill, Gettysburg, and Bristow Station, and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have made numerous contributions to the arts and sports, as exemplified by the achievements of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Eugene O'Neill, Helen Hayes, Georgia O'Keefe, John L. Sullivan, Connie Mack, and many others, and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans, including Kathryn Sullivan, the first American woman to walk in space, and Christa Corrigan McAuliffe, America's first school teacher in space who perished on the Challenger mission, have bravely served as America's pioneers in space, and

WHEREAS, More than 200 Irish Americans have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and Twenty American Presidents have been of Irish ancestry, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By the Albany County Legislature that the month of March 2014 is designated as "Irish-American Heritage Month" in Albany County, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Albany County Legislature asks all Albany County residents to observe this month by celebrating the contributions of Irish Americans to our County, State and Nation, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the County Legislature is directed to forward certified copies of this resolution to the appropriate County Officials.

Adopted by unanimous vote. 3/10/14