Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0493-2026	**Version:**	*	**Name:**	Declaring April 7 as White Star Family Day.
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Attachments:	1. Res. No. 493, 2. June 11, 2026 - Stated Meeting Agenda, 3. Committee Report 9/18/26, 4. Hearing Testimony 9/18/26, 5. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 6-11-26				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
6/11/2026	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
6/11/2026	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
9/18/2026	*	Committee on Veterans	Hearing Held by Committee	
9/18/2026	*	Committee on Veterans	Laid Over by Committee	
9/18/2026	*	Committee on Mental Health and Substance Use	Hearing Held by Committee	
9/18/2026	*	Committee on Mental Health and Substance Use	Laid Over by Committee	

Res. No. 493

Resolution declaring April 7 as White Star Family Day in the City of New York

By Council Members Ariola, Morano, Louis, Aldebol, Maloney, Brooks-Powers, Schulman, Paladino and Vernikov

Whereas, White Star Families is an unofficial, grassroots term used to describe families who have lost a Servicemember or Veteran to suicide, distinguishing them from federally recognized Gold Star Families, whose loved ones died in combat or while serving on active duty; and

Whereas, Unlike Gold Star Families, White Star Families receive no formal federal designation, ceremonial recognition, or guaranteed survivor benefits linked specifically to suicide loss, which can compound grief, isolation, and post-loss hardships; and

Whereas, A 2023 scoping review of 51 studies found that families of Veterans who die by suicide often

experience “complicated grief”-a persistent and intense yearning that severely interferes with daily life-as well as survivor guilt, stigma, and elevated mental health risks, including depression and suicidality among surviving family members; and

Whereas, According to the review, despite being directly affected by suicide outcomes, Veteran families are rarely centered in suicide-prevention interventions; and

Whereas, Suicide loss in military and Veteran families has also been linked to long-term economic strain, particularly when deaths occur after service and do not trigger line-of-duty survivor benefits; and

Whereas, Nationally, Veterans die by suicide at more than twice the rate of non-Veterans, and in 2023, 6,398 U.S. Veterans died by suicide-an average of 17.5 Veteran deaths per day-according to data from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

Whereas, In 2023, 167 New York State (NYS) Veterans died by suicide, the highest number in more than 20 years, representing a 25.8% increase from 2022 and far outpacing the national Veteran suicide increase of 1.4% during the same period, per data from the VA; and

Whereas, Additionally, Veterans ages 18 to 34 in NYS had a suicide rate of 42.3 per 100,000 in 2023-nearly five times the rate of civilians in the same age group-placing young Veterans among the highest-risk populations; and

Whereas, Similar trends were seen in New York City (NYC or “City”) where a 2024 New York Health Foundation report on Deaths of Despair and Suicide Among NYC Veterans, found that between 2012 and 2022, NYC Veterans died by suicide at approximately twice the rate of NYC civilians, and suicide rates were highest among young Veterans ages 18-34 and white Veterans who were more than 2.5 times more likely to die by suicide than Black Veterans; and

Whereas, Per the report’s finding, the Bronx had the highest rates of Veteran suicide among the five boroughs and across the entire state; and

Whereas, Despite the high rates of suicide among Veterans, there is no official count of White Star

Families in the United States, as neither the Department of Defense nor the VA tracks families bereaved by Veteran suicide as a distinct population; and

Whereas, In New York, Veteran suicide-prevention efforts are increasingly framed as a public-health and family-impact issue, yet State and City reports still lack a dedicated category recognizing White Star Families; and

Whereas, Researchers and Veteran-serving organizations consistently conclude that formal recognition of White Star Families is critical to reducing stigma, improving access to coordinated support, and addressing the full social and familial impact of Veteran suicide; and

Whereas, Approximately 560,000 Veterans and 28,596 active-duty Servicemembers reside in NYS, including an estimated 125,000 to 200,000 Veterans in NYC, and each Veteran or Servicemember death by suicide is a profound loss to the City and to surviving families who are often left without recognition or coordinated support; and

Whereas, It is imperative that the sacrifices of White Star Families are not forgotten and that they are served with the same dedication as they have served our nation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York declares April 7 as White Star Family Day in the City of New York.

LS #22281
5/28/2026
M.B.