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Res. No. 396

Resolution declaring May 15 through June 15 as Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month and June 7 as Tourette Syndrome Awareness Day in the City of New York

By The Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Members Louis, Farías, Thomas-Henry, Maloney, Cabán, Banks, Won, Brewer and Narcisse

Whereas, Tourette syndrome (TS) is a neurological disorder characterized by involuntary, repetitive movements and vocalizations known as tics; and

Whereas, Tics can be short, simple actions or complex patterns of movement, such as eye blinking or other eye movements, grimacing, head or shoulder jerking, touching an object, jumping, bending, or twisting, or vocal sounds, such as repetitive throat clearing, sniffing, barking, grunting, repeating words or phrases, or using vulgar or offensive words or phrases; and

Whereas, Individuals with TS describe a buildup of physical tension or an uncomfortable, urge-like sensation that is only relieved by performing the tic; and

Whereas, Anxiety, excitement, fatigue, and stress can worsen a tic, in type, frequency, and intensity, which can affect how an individual with TS acts in educational, social, or work settings; and

Whereas, TS is a chronic condition that usually manifests between the ages of 5 and 10 and while symptoms can last into adulthood, it can change throughout a person’s life; and

Whereas, The United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that studies estimate that 1 out of 162 children have TS, and about 83% of children with TS have another disorder; and

Whereas, According to the CDC, although there is no cure for TS, there are treatments to help manage the tics, and medication and behavioral treatments are available when tics cause pain or injury, interfere with

school, work, or social life, or cause stress; and

Whereas, New York City (NYC) is home to approximately one million residents living with a disability, according to the NYC Commission on Human Rights; and

Whereas, TS is commonly misunderstood as involving involuntary swearing or offensive language; however, the Tourette Association of America (TAA) reports that coprolalia, which is a complex vocal tic that may include inappropriate/socially unacceptable words or phrases, occurs in 10-15% of cases; and

Whereas, Public misunderstanding of TS and involuntary tics can lead to real-world discrimination, as reflected in April 2025 reporting about a hospital employee in White Plains, New York who alleged he was terminated from his job after his involuntary facial tics were misinterpreted as confrontational behavior, prompting a civil right lawsuit claiming that his TS was treated as a basis for adverse employment action; and

Whereas, TAA recognizes TS Awareness Month as occurring from May 15 to June 15 and TS Awareness Day on June 7, and promotes resources and public education during this period; and

Whereas, In February 2026, the New York State Senate adopted a Senate Resolution Memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 15 to June 15, 2026, as Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month in New York State, in conjunction with the observance of National Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month; and

Whereas, Increased public awareness of TS supports safer and more inclusive school, workplace, and community environments by promoting accurate information about tics, reducing stigma, and encouraging timely access to appropriate supports and services; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York declares May 15 through June 15 as Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month and June 7 as Tourette Syndrome Awareness Day in the City of New York.

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