

RESOLUTION NO. 150

ESTABLISHING THE USA-250 COMMISSION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE 250TH YEAR FOLLOWING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

Introduced: 4/10/23

By Perlee, Feeney, Burgdorf, Grimm, Mayo, Peter, Ricard, Whalen, Beston, Chapman, Clay, Commisso, Efekoro, Ethier, Kuhn, Lekakis, McLean Lane, Miller, Plotsky, Reinhardt, Rosano, Simpson, Ward, Willingham, Cleary, Collins, Cunningham, Domalewicz, Drake, Lockart, Mauriello, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Reidy, Smith and Tunny:

WHEREAS, In 2016, the “United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act” was passed by Congress and signed into Law, beginning Federal efforts to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the establishment of our Nation, and

WHEREAS, In 2021, the New York State Legislature passed the “New York State 250th Commemoration Act”, which was signed into law on December 22nd, 2021, and

WHEREAS, The New York State 250th Commemoration act established a Statewide commission to plan, develop, coordinate, and promote activities relating to the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution and resulting establishment of our Nation, and

WHEREAS, Discover Albany, as Albany County’s designated Tourism Promotion Agency, has recognized the importance of the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution, and has been working to coordinate events and commemorates related to the Anniversary; and

WHEREAS, The Albany County Legislature recognizes the importance of this commemorative effort in building close ties of shared community and kinship, and views such efforts as necessary across our State and County, and

WHEREAS, At the beginning of the Seven Years’ War in June and July 1754, representatives from seven British colonies met in Albany to discuss various threats and issues shared by the colonies, during which time Benjamin Franklin proposed the Albany Plan of Union, a plan to unite the British colonies under a single representative colonial government, and while the plan failed, it was an important precursor to the later unification of the thirteen colonies as the United States, and

WHEREAS, Albany County was the focal point of many important parts of the American War of Independence, and was critically the intended end point for British forces in the decisive Saratoga Campaign which turned the tide of the conflict, and

WHEREAS, Many important leaders, political thinkers, and other individuals that took part in the American Revolution originated in or resided in what currently constitutes Albany County such as the Schuyler family, Peter Gansevoort, Abraham Ten Broeck, and many other prominent individuals, and

WHEREAS, Albany County was the scene of bitter conflict between Loyalist and Patriot militias, culminating in the Battle of the Normanskill in 1777, in which local militia and Continental Army troops, including Black troops from the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, prevented the Loyalist militias from providing aid to General Burgoyne ahead of the decisive Battle of Saratoga, and

WHEREAS, Given Albany County's critical role and relevance in the events which lead to the establishment of the United States, it is incumbent upon the County to follow the example of both the Federal Government and State of New York and establish an organized effort to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution and to celebrate this milestone for our Nation, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, By the Albany County Legislature that the USA-250 Commission is hereby established in Albany County for the purposes of celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the USA-250 Commission be comprised of [eight] nine members, one of which shall be appointed by the County Executive, one of which shall be appointed by the Chair of the Albany County Legislature, one of which shall be appointed by the Majority Leader of the Albany County Legislature, one of which shall be appointed by the Leader of the Legislative Black Caucus, one of which shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Albany County Legislature, and one of which shall be appointed by Chief Executive Officer of Discover Albany. The [five] six initially appointed members shall be responsible for identifying and selecting three historical societies or American Revolutionary history-related organizations in Albany County to appoint one member to the Commission each, with all such members serving for the duration of the Commission's existence; provided, however, that if the [five] six initially appointed members determine a specific individual not associated with a relevant historical society or organization to be especially qualified, such individual may be appointed to the Commission on the unanimous agreement of the [five] six initially appointed members, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chairperson of the USA-250 Commission be elected by a majority of its members upon all seats of the Commission having been filled, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the USA-250 Commission is authorized to take any and all actions necessary to promote the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution in Albany County subject to available funding, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chairperson of the USA-250 Commission shall be empowered to conclude a memorandum of understanding with Discover Albany for the purposes of accepting grant applications related to the 250th Anniversary and making recommendations for said grants to the Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau Education Foundation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the USA-250 Commission shall act as an organizing resource for the various cities, towns, and villages throughout Albany County as they plan related commemoration events, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the USA-250 Commission shall terminate on September 4th, 2033.

Adopted by unanimous vote – 6/12/23