

State of New York
Legislative Resolution



Senate No. 4381

BY: Senators Maltese, Connor, DeFrancisco, Farley, Fuschillo, Golden, Gonzalez, Hunley, C. Johnson, O. Johnson, Lanza, Larkin, LaValle, Little, Maziarz, Morahan, Onorato, Padavan, Robach, Saland, Sampson, Skelos, Smith, Stachowski, Stavisky, Trunzo and Volker

COMMEMORATING the 54th Anniversary of the
USS Bennington Disaster on May 26, 2008

WHEREAS, Members of the United States Armed Forces, who served so faithfully and courageously in wars in which our Nation's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace during peacetime, deserve the highest commendation of this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to commemorate the 54th Anniversary of the USS Bennington Disaster, and to pay tribute to those who lost their lives, as well as recognize the many heroes who conducted their duties with the utmost honor and bravery; and

WHEREAS, On August 16, 1777, one of the most historic battles of the Revolutionary War took place near Bennington, Vermont; nearly 170 years later, the keel of a huge aircraft carrier was laid at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in New York; the carrier would be named in commemoration of the battle and christened the USS Bennington on February 26, 1944; and

WHEREAS, The USS Bennington was laid down during World War II as a CV or fast carrier; action included support of the landings on two Jima, attacks against the islands of Japan including factories and shipping facilities of Tokyo and Yokosuka; she also provided support for the landings on Okinawa; after the war she was decommissioned in April of 1946, in the Atlantic Fleet; and

WHEREAS, The Bennington was re-commissioned in November of 1952, following extensive modernization; after this modernization she was reclassified as a CVA or attack carrier and began her shakedown training in February 1953; during this activity an explosion occurred on April 27, 1953, in the forward fireroom which cost eleven lives; following a two-week period for repairs, the Bennington took part in NATO exercises and made a Mediterranean cruise; and

WHEREAS, On May 26, 1954, the aircraft carrier USS Bennington CVA-20 was steaming off the Atlantic coast for carrier qualifications; this cruise was interrupted by a violent explosion or series of explosions; and

WHEREAS, The ship suffered massive damage in the forward third with sheets of flame and a series of explosions; nearly one hundred men lost their lives within seconds of the explosions and over one hundred others were seriously injured; the ship miraculously proceeded under its own power to Quonset Point, Rhode Island to land her injured; and

WHEREAS, The explosion on the Bennington cost the lives of 104 officers and men and caused serious injury to over 139 others; it was the second worst disaster aboard a Naval vessel which did not involve enemy action; and