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A PROCLAMATION TO BE SUBMITTED BY LEGISLATOR GRANT

RE: Supporting the Passage of the Federal "Buy American" Bipartisan Flag Amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 Recently Approved in the House of Representatives

WHEREAS, the American Flag is the most treasured and recognized symbol of the United States and the freedoms that have been protected by the U.S. military for more than two centuries; and

WHEREAS, most Americans do not realize that departments of the federal government have been purchasing and displaying flags manufactured overseas; and

WHEREAS, veterans were the first group of Americans to express their dismay over this practice, and their collective advocacy led to legislation that requires the Veterans Administration to only purchase flags that are 100% American Made; and

WHEREAS, veterans have again called our nation's attention to the utilization of American flags produced overseas to be lain upon the caskets of our deceased members of the American military that return home to be laid to final rest; and

WHEREAS, dismay has turned to outrage, and an amendment passed the full House of Representatives last week that would require that the U.S. Department of Defense only purchase flags that are 100% American Made; and

WHEREAS, this amendment, sponsored by Representative Mike Thompson of California (D-California) and originally introduced by Representative Frank LoBiondo (R-New Jersey), is a bipartisan provision passed as part of H.R. 1960, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Chair of the Erie County Legislature, Betty Jean Grant, established VALER4Valor, an ad hoc committee whose mission is to advocate on behalf of veterans' concerns, as well as to link veterans' advocates with community and government resources to realize the goal of veteran empowerment and successful reintegration back into the civilian community; and

WHEREAS, at the June 17, 2013 meeting of VALER4Valor, the "Buy American" Flag Amendment was unanimously supported; and

WHEREAS, the flag that draped President Lincoln's coffin, the flag that was raised at Iwo Jima and the flag that was planted on the moon by Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin were all 100% American Made and are indelibly etched in the collective memory of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper for this legislative body to add its voice to the chorus of veterans and veterans' advocates who are supporting passage of the "Buy American" Flag Amendment, now under consideration by the U.S. Senate; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body convey its full and unreserved support for the "Buy American" Flag Amendment that is a bipartisan provision of the National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1960) recently approved in the U.S. House of Representatives and now being considered by the United States Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this legislation be forwarded to President Barack Obama, United States Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gilliband, Mr. Henry Curtis, Chair of VALER4Valor, and all others deemed necessary and proper.

FISCAL IMPACT: None for resolution.