

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 365 Session of 2024

INTRODUCED BY FRANKEL, GIRAL, KHAN, FREEMAN, GERGELY, GREEN, KAZEEM, SALISBURY, SANCHEZ, SCHLOSSBERG, SHUSTERMAN, SIEGEL, SMITH-WADE-EL, SOLOMON, WAXMAN, KINSEY, HADDOCK, McNEILL, PIELLI, VENKAT, HANBIDGE, JAMES, PROBST, HOHENSTEIN, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, BOYD, BERNSTINE, CIRESI, MERSKI, MALAGARI, D. WILLIAMS, DELLOSO, KENYATTA, KRAJEWSKI, KAUFER, PISCIOTTANO, PASHINSKI, BOROWSKI, O'MARA, GUENST, NEILSON, HILL-EVANS, D. MILLER, FLEMING, BRENNAN, CERRATO, DALEY AND MENTZER, APRIL 3, 2024

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, APRIL 29, 2024

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of May 2024 as "Jewish American Heritage
2 Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania and the United States have served as
4 havens of religious tolerance for communities of all faiths; and

5 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania takes great pride in the varied
6 religious and cultural traditions of residents of this
7 Commonwealth and seeks to afford all people in Pennsylvania the
8 opportunity to better understand, recognize and appreciate the
9 rich histories, cultures and shared principles of Jewish
10 Americans; and

11 WHEREAS, The histories of Jewish Americans and that of the
12 United States and Pennsylvania are interwoven; and

13 WHEREAS, Escaping persecution, Jewish immigrants established
14 the first documented Jewish communal settlement in North America

1 in 1654; and

2 WHEREAS, Since then, Jewish individuals have made innumerable
3 contributions to American history, culture, military, science
4 and government; and

5 WHEREAS, From 1820 through 1924, millions of Jewish
6 immigrants arrived on United States shores from Europe; and

7 WHEREAS, One such immigrant, Irving Berlin composed "God
8 Bless America," which many consider the "unofficial National
9 Anthem" of our nation; and

10 WHEREAS, Jewish-American poet Emma Lazarus wrote the poem
11 that adorns the Statue of Liberty, "The New Colossus," in 1883;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Countless Jewish Americans have bravely served in
14 the United States military in every American conflict since the
15 nation's founding, including the 500,000 Jewish-American
16 soldiers that served during World War II alone; and

17 WHEREAS, Jewish-American businessman Adolphus Simeon Solomons
18 along with Clara Barton and others formed the American Red Cross
19 in 1881; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1933, Albert Einstein, who was later recognized
21 by Time magazine as the "Person of the Century," left Nazi
22 Germany and immigrated to the United States; and

23 WHEREAS, ~~Lewis Charles Levin served as the first Jewish~~ <--
24 ~~member of the United States Congress starting in 1845, followed~~
25 ~~by Jewish American firsts, including~~ JEWISH-AMERICAN FIRSTS <--

26 INCLUDE United States Secretary of Commerce and Labor Oscar
27 Straus, United States Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis,
28 United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and many
29 others; and

30 WHEREAS, Nearly all 8 million Jewish people who live in the

1 United States come from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds,
2 including African-American Muslims, immigrants and native-born
3 Americans, and represent approximately 2.4% of the country's
4 population; and

5 WHEREAS, Today, almost 300,000 Jewish adults call
6 Pennsylvania home, comprising more than 2% of this
7 Commonwealth's population; and

8 WHEREAS, Upon settling in Philadelphia in the 1700s, Jewish
9 Americans have contributed to communities throughout this
10 Commonwealth; and

11 WHEREAS, Lancaster resident Isaac Cohen was Pennsylvania's
12 first physician; and

13 WHEREAS, Jewish Americans, including former Pennsylvania
14 American Civil Liberties Union Legal Director Stefan Presser and
15 former Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth Executive
16 Director Shelly Yanoff, have advocated for civil liberties and
17 health care for children; and

18 WHEREAS, Many Jewish Americans have served in Pennsylvania
19 elected offices, including former Governor Ed Rendell, current
20 Governor Josh Shapiro and members of the General Assembly; and

21 WHEREAS, Jewish Americans in both Pennsylvania and our
22 country as a whole continue to dedicate themselves to public
23 service despite persistent prejudice; and

24 WHEREAS, As the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has
25 highlighted, "antisemitism has persisted in many forms for over
26 two thousand years"; and

27 WHEREAS, More than 6 million Jewish people, a third of the
28 world's Jewish population, were murdered during the Holocaust;
29 and

30 WHEREAS, Incidents of antisemitic violence and rhetoric are

1 still prevalent in our country and this Commonwealth, and
2 educational initiatives are critical to combating bigotry; and

3 WHEREAS, It is appropriate to acknowledge and promote
4 awareness of the myriad invaluable contributions of Jewish
5 Americans in Pennsylvania and across the country and extend to
6 them the respect and camaraderie every American deserves;
7 therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
9 month of May 2024 as "Jewish American Heritage Month" in
10 Pennsylvania.