

2024 -- H 8287

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING MAY OF 2024, TO BE "JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH" IN  
THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Finkelman, Ackerman, Knight, Kislak, Boylan,  
Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Place, Noret, and Dawson

Date Introduced: May 21, 2024

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, Jewish American history spans more than 350 years, dating back to the  
2 colonial era and early European settlements in Rhode Island, and is woven through every part of  
3 American history through to the present day; and

4           WHEREAS, Rhode Island is home to approximately 18,750 Jewish Americans and the  
5 Jewish population in Rhode Island has and continues to make enormous contributions that benefit  
6 Rhode Island; and

7           WHEREAS, Jews played an integral role in supporting American independence and the  
8 religious freedom guaranteed in the establishment of the nation; and

9           WHEREAS, In the mid-1800s, a wave of German Jewish immigrants, fleeing persecution  
10 and economic hardship in search of new opportunities, arrived in the United States. This wave of  
11 immigration led to the expansion of Jewish communities across the nation and the founding of  
12 B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee, and the National Council of Jewish Women; and

13           WHEREAS, In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Jewish immigration to the United States  
14 increased in response to rising anti-semitism in Europe, and particularly in response to the  
15 pogroms in the Russian Empire. Overall, more than two million Eastern European Jews  
16 immigrated to the United States during this time; and

17           WHEREAS, Restrictive immigration policies beginning in the 1920s stemmed the flow  
18 of new immigrants to the United States. Many Jewish Americans opposed these policies, but they  
19 remained in place, leading to the United States' tragic refusal to accept refugees from Nazi

1 Germany and leaving many of them unable to escape the Holocaust; and

2 WHEREAS, Jewish Americans and Jewish immigrants to America have contributed to  
3 every aspect of American culture and history, including education, science, business,  
4 philanthropy, politics, civil rights, and the arts; among them are key figures in American and  
5 world history including Jonas Salk, Albert Einstein, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg; and

6 WHEREAS, In light of continuing and reemerging anti-Semitism in America, expressed  
7 openly and violently, it is vital and crucial that the history, heritage and culture of Jewish  
8 Americans be fully known, understood and valued; and

9 WHEREAS, Jewish American Heritage Month is an opportunity to celebrate the vibrancy  
10 and importance of Rhode Island’s Jewish American community, whose accomplishments and  
11 contributions strengthen and enrich all aspects of community life in the State of Rhode Island;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, During Jewish American Heritage Month, Rhode Islanders are encouraged  
14 to commemorate and celebrate the essential contributions, sacrifices, and accomplishments that  
15 Jewish Americans have made and continue to make in our State; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby  
17 proclaims May of 2024, to be “Jewish American Heritage Month” in the State of Rhode Island;  
18 and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
20 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Jeffrey M. Wice, Executive Director,  
21 National Association of Jewish Legislators.

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