

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the Jewish American experience is a story of faith, fortitude, and progress and one that is connected to key tenets of American identity including our nation's commitment to freedom of religion and conscience; and

WHEREAS, generations of Jews have fled to the United States in search of a better life for themselves and their families, and these immigrants made invaluable contributions in a myriad of ways in support of equality and civil rights through their leadership and achievements; and

WHEREAS, now recognized in May Jewish American Heritage Month was first proclaimed in April 2006 by Presidential Proclamation stating that “the Jewish American story, and the story of our Nation as a whole, is fueled by faith, resilience, and hope”; and

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans connect to their Jewish identity in a variety of ways such as culturally, ethnically, religiously, and by following Jewish ethics and values; and

WHEREAS, 150 years ago, in 1873 the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Puget Sound, the first Jewish organization in Washington, was established in Olympia to create a cemetery. The cemetery is still in use and is the oldest Jewish cemetery in Washington. The Hebrew Benevolent Society was later absorbed by Temple Beth Hatfiloh. Founded in 1937, TBH continues to be a growing and vibrant community, currently growing their footprint in downtown Olympia with their courtyard expansion project; and

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans are racially, ethnically, socially, politically, and economically diverse with approximately 12 to 15 percent of Jews in the United States being people of color; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, Jewish Americans have increasingly experienced anti-Semitism, including but not limited to physical attacks, vandalism, verbal and physical harassment, and hateful comments posted on social media and other online platforms; and

WHEREAS, this month, we honor Jewish Americans — past and present — whose experience and accomplishments are inextricably woven into the tapestry of our community, including places of worship such as Temple Beth Hatfiloh in Olympia. The temple serves as a center for Jewish life and is active in the greater community, pursuing the work of Tikkun Olam (which translates to “Repair of the World”) by advocating for immigrant justice, engaging in environmental stewardship, and collaborating with Interfaith Works and other organizations; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Olympia City Council, does hereby proclaim the month of May 2023 as

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

in the city of Olympia and encourages all Olympians to condemn anti-Semitism hatred and bigotry of any kind, to include Jewish Americans in all facets of civic life in our community, and join our Jewish community in the work of repairing the world.

SIGNED IN THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON THIS NINETH DAY OF MAY 2023.

OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL

Cheryl Selby, Mayor