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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 572

Offered January 31, 2025

Commending the Jewish community in Virginia.

Patron—Owen

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia has a proud tradition of religious pluralism and a commitment to the inherent dignity and equality of all its residents, rooted in the founding principles articulated by Virginians such as Thomas Jefferson in the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom and George Washington's assurance of safety and freedom to the Jewish community in his letter in 1790 to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, where he promised the United States government would give "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance"; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish community in Virginia has been an integral part of the Commonwealth's history and has made significant contributions to the social, cultural, economic, and scientific advancements of the Commonwealth, including leadership in civil rights, education, medicine, and public service; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish community has played a critical role in the advancement of human rights in the United States, including through the founding of key civil rights organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League to combat hatred and discrimination, the co-founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and their service as leaders within the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, which coordinated advocacy for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

WHEREAS, Jewish individuals, including the disproportionate participation of Jewish Freedom Riders during the Civil Rights Movement, have courageously stood alongside other minority groups in the fight for equality, demonstrating the Jewish principle of tikkun olam, or repairing the world, as a moral imperative; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish community has contributed to the founding of modern social work and to groundbreaking scientific, artistic, and cultural achievements; notably, despite comprising less than 0.2 percent of the global population, Jewish individuals have been awarded approximately 20 percent of Nobel Prizes, reflecting their substantial contributions to science, literature, and peace efforts; and

WHEREAS, antisemitism has tragically seen a resurgence in recent years, including acts of hatred, violence, and discrimination targeting Jewish individuals and institutions throughout the United States and the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, such acts of antisemitism are a threat not only to the Jewish community but to the values of liberty, safety, and mutual respect that bind all Virginians together; and

WHEREAS, combating antisemitism requires vigilance, education, and the active commitment of both government and citizens to oppose prejudice and bigotry in all forms; and

WHEREAS, Virginians have unequivocally condemned antisemitism and all forms of hate that threaten the safety and well-being of members of the Jewish community and are committed to ensuring that Jewish residents are welcomed, valued, and protected as integral members of the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the members of the Jewish community in Virginia hereby be commended for their profound contributions to the Commonwealth's history, culture, and progress, as well as for their enduring commitment to justice and equality; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to representatives of the Jewish Community Federations in the Commonwealth and the Jewish Community Federation of Greater Washington as an expression of the House of Delegates' commitment to remain vigilant against antisemitism and all forms of intolerance and promote unity and mutual respect among the diverse communities in the Commonwealth, as well as its admiration for the Jewish community's pivotal role in founding and advancing civil rights and human rights organizations, their commitment to repairing the world, and their outsized contributions to science, education, and social progress.

INTRODUCED

HR572