

Proclamation for Jewish American Heritage Month, May 2024

Whereas, during May our nation celebrates Jewish American Heritage Month to highlight the inspiring history of Jewish Americans and amplify joyful, powerful stories of Jewish life in America; and

Whereas, Jewish American Heritage Month has been celebrated annually in this country since 2006 when President George W. Bush declared, “As a nation of immigrants, the United States is better and stronger because Jewish people from all over the world have chosen to become American citizens;” and

Whereas, Jewish people, often fleeing persecution, played a vital role in American history since this country’s founding, making important contributions in civil rights, culture, business, and more; including former California U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer and the late Dianne Feinstein, filmmaker Steven Spielberg who graduated from Saratoga High School and attended University of Southern California and Cal State Long Beach, and businessman Levi Strauss, who founded the first company to manufacture blue jeans in San Francisco, later known as “Levi’s;” and

Whereas, Jewish Americans are racially, ethnically, socially, politically, and economically diverse, and include many people of color, and the San Francisco Bay Area is home to approximately 350,000 Jews, one of the nation’s largest Jewish populations; and

Whereas, Alameda is home to vibrant centers of Jewish life, including Temple Israel and Chabad of Alameda which each host public Menorah lightings to celebrate Hanukah, and other community events; and

Whereas, honoring Jewish American Heritage Month must also include acknowledging the pain and anguish every Jewish American is experiencing now because of attacks on Jews at home and abroad; and

Whereas, there has been a dramatic increase in antisemitic incidents involving Jewish Americans since the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas, and Israel’s response in Gaza – more than 4400 incidents – which is more than double the number in 2022, and more than at any time since the Anti-Defamation League began tracking incidents in 1979. These incidents include physical attacks, verbal and physical harassment, vandalism, and hateful comments posted on social media; and

Whereas, the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas has endured for more than six months, and President Biden in April joined with the leaders of 17 other countries to call for Hamas to release all remaining hostages in exchange for a ceasefire; and

Whereas, the City of Alameda shares an obligation to condemn and combat antisemitism wherever it exists and to stand with the Jewish American community against hatred and bigotry wherever it exists.

Now, therefore be it resolved, that I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, do hereby proclaim May 2024 as

Jewish American Heritage Month

in the City of Alameda and encourage all Alamedans to learn more about Jewish history and culture by participating in local events, including Chabad of Alameda's Lag Baomer Carnival & BBQ, Sunday, May 26, from 1-3pm, and Temple Israel's Dave's Swing-time Big Band Concert, Monday, May 27, at 8pm; and to learn more about Jewish history and culture by viewing related books, films, and other resources at the Alameda Free Library.

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Mayor, City of Alameda