

**2023 -- S 1068**

LC003051

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023**

**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**PROCLAIMING MAY OF 2023 AS "JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH"**

Introduced By: Senators Zurier, Miller, Kallman, Bell, Felag, Gallo, Raptakis, Cano, F. Lombardi, and Lawson

Date Introduced: May 25, 2023

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1           WHEREAS, Ever since their first arrival to our shores in the 16th century, Jewish  
2 immigrants to America have played a central role in the creation, growth, freedom, prosperity,  
3 and strength of the United States of America; and

4           WHEREAS, On April 20, 2006, the United States government proclaimed May as Jewish  
5 American Heritage Month, stating, "As a nation of immigrants, the United States is better and  
6 stronger because Jewish people, from all over the world, have chosen to become American  
7 citizens"; and

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

11           WHEREAS, The first Jewish immigrants in the small but growing colony of Newport,  
12 arrived from Barbados in the mid to late 17th century; and

13           WHEREAS, The Newport Jewish community established the Congregation Jeshuat  
14 Israel, which built a synagogue in Newport that was dedicated in 1763; and

15           WHEREAS, The Newport synagogue, known today as the Touro Synagogue, is  
16 America's oldest standing Jewish house of worship; and

17           WHEREAS, In August of 1790, President George Washington chose to visit Newport for  
18 a public appearance to rally support for the new Bill of Rights, and through a letter to the  
19 President of the Congregation Jeshuat Israel articulated the new government's support for the  
20 First Amendment rights of religious freedom and separation of church and state; and

1           WHEREAS, The Touro Synagogue Foundation hosts an annual reading of Washington's  
2 letter to commemorate this transformative event in our Nation's history; and

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

5           WHEREAS, In 2022, Jewish Americans faced a dramatic rise in antisemitic incidents-36  
6 percent higher than in 2021- including, but not limited to, physical attacks, vandalism, verbal and  
7 physical harassment, and hateful comments on social media; and

8           WHEREAS, Humanity shares an obligation to condemn and combat antisemitism  
9 wherever it exists, to include Jewish Americans in all facets of civic life, and to stand with the  
10 Jewish American community against hatred and bigotry; and

11           WHEREAS, The Jewish community has greatly contributed to the vibrancy and diverse  
12 heritage of the City of Providence, and has supported our State and Country by serving in the  
13 Armed Forces of the United States and the State of Rhode Island National Guard; and

14           WHEREAS, Rhode Islanders celebrate the heritage of the Jewish American community  
15 in Rhode Island and the deep civic engagement of local Jewish institutions, schools and  
16 synagogues; now, therefore be it

17           RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby proclaims May of  
18 2023, to be "Jewish American Heritage Month" in the State of Rhode Island, and calls upon all  
19 our citizens to commemorate this occasion by appropriately celebrating the significant  
20 contributions of the Jewish community's history, heritage, and culture to our Country and the  
21 State of Rhode Island; and be it further

22           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
23 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Congregation Jeshuat Israel, the Jewish  
24 Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, and the Rhode  
25 Island Israel Collaborative.

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