

# TOWN OF FAIRFAX PROCLAMATION

## Jewish American Heritage Month, May 2024

**WHEREAS**, Jewish Americans have been an important part of the American story and have greatly contributed to all areas of American life and culture since our nation's earliest days; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 20, 2006, the Federal Government proclaimed May as Jewish American Heritage Month, stating, "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, since then, proclamations in support of Jewish American Heritage Month have been made by Presidents of the United States annually; 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 support of equality and civil rights through their leadership and achievements; 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** Jewish Americans are racially, ethnically, socially, politically and economically diverse, and around 25 percent of Bay Area Jewish households include a person of color, increasing to nearly 40 percent of households if the head of the household is younger than 35; and

**WHEREAS**, at the start of 2023, antisemitism was already at an all-time high, including but not limited to physical attacks, vandalism, verbal and physical harassment, and hateful comments posted on social media; and

**WHEREAS**, antisemitism rose exponentially this past year, with a reported 360% increase in antisemitic incidents in the U.S. during the three months following October 7, 2023, from the same period of time in 2022 according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL); and

**WHEREAS**, implicit bias and antisemitic attitudes are widespread today, with 63% of Jews surveyed in the Bay Area in 2023 agreed that people make assumptions about them because they are Jewish, and the ADL found 24% of Americans surveyed endorsed six or more anti-Jewish tropes in 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Fairfax shares an obligation to condemn and combat antisemitism wherever it exists, to include Jewish Americans in all facets of civic life, and to stand with the Jewish American community against hatred or bigotry in our town and country; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a need for education and policies that are culturally competent when describing, discussing, or addressing the impacts of being Jewish in all aspects of American society, including discourse and policy; and

**WHEREAS** we celebrate the rich and diverse heritage of the Jewish American community, including those who live, work and play in the Town of Fairfax, and;

**WHEREAS**, we recognize Jewish American commitment to civic engagement and how the Town of Fairfax has been enriched by local Jewish institutions and synagogues.

**THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED** that the Town of Fairfax hereby declares the month of May as Jewish American Heritage Month in appreciation of the achievements and contributions made by members of the Jewish community. The Fairfax Town Council calls upon all residents to celebrate Jewish Americans who have woven the fabric of our country and community and supports opportunities to learn more about Jewish American history and culture.

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED** that the Town of Fairfax will continue efforts to confront antisemitism and other forms of hate impacting the Jewish community, support local education about the diversity of our Jewish American community, and integrate Jewish American culture into future programs, activities, and ceremonies throughout the year.



Signed this 1<sup>st</sup> day of May 2024

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Barbara Coler, Mayor of Fairfax