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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Jewish American history spans more than 350 years, dating back to the colonial era and early European settlements in New York, and is woven through every part of American history to the present day; and

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WHEREAS, Jewish people played an integral role in supporting American independence and the religious freedom guaranteed in the establishment of the new nation; and

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WHEREAS, In the mid-1800s, a wave of German Jewish immigrants, fleeing persecution and economic hardship in search of new opportunity, arrived in the United States; this wave of immigration led to the expansion of Jewish communities across the nation and the founding of B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee, and the National Council of Jewish Women; and

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WHEREAS, In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Jewish immigration to the United States increased in response to rising anti-Semitism in Europe and particularly in response to the pogroms in the Russian Empire; more than two million Eastern European Jewish people immigrated to the United States during this time; and

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1           WHEREAS, Beginning in the 1920s, restrictive immigration  
2 policies stemmed the flow of new immigrants to the United  
3 States; many Jewish Americans opposed these policies, but they  
4 remained in place, leading to the United States' tragic  
5 refusal to accept refugees from Nazi Germany and leaving many  
6 unable to escape the Holocaust; and

7           WHEREAS, Jewish Americans and Jewish immigrants to America  
8 have contributed to every aspect of American culture and  
9 history, including education, science, business, philanthropy,  
10 politics, civil rights, and the arts, and key figures in  
11 American and world history include Jonas Salk, Albert  
12 Einstein, and Ruth Bader Ginsberg; and

13           WHEREAS, In light of continuing and reemerging  
14 anti-Semitism in America, expressed openly and violently, it  
15 is crucial that the history, heritage, and culture of Jewish  
16 Americans be fully known, understood, and valued; and

17           WHEREAS, Jewish American Heritage Month is an opportunity  
18 to celebrate the vibrancy and importance of Illinois' Jewish  
19 American citizens whose accomplishments and contributions  
20 strengthen and enrich culture, governance, the economy,  
21 education, and all aspects of community life in the State; and

22           WHEREAS, During Jewish American Heritage Month, it is

1 fitting for Illinoisans to commemorate and celebrate the  
2 essential contributions, sacrifices, and accomplishments that  
3 Jewish Americans have made and continue to make in the State;  
4 therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL  
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we declare May 2023 as  
7 Jewish American Heritage Month in the State of Illinois.