

Proclamation



CITY OF NORTHAMPTON
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Hampshire Pride March & Celebration May 6, 2023

WHEREAS, in 1981, conservative members of Congress introduced proposed legislation called “The Family Protection Act” to roll back the social progress made by the civil rights, feminist, and LGBTQIA+ movements. This legislation specifically targeted the rights of gay and lesbian people; and

WHEREAS, in April 1982, a group of dedicated and concerned residents organized “GALA” (Gay and Lesbian Activists) and called for a march in downtown Northampton in opposition to the so-called “Family Protection Act” to be held on Saturday, May 15, 1982; and

WHEREAS, that first Northampton Pride March had just a few hundred marchers, with some of them wearing bags over their heads to hide their identities from their employers out of fear of losing their jobs or housing; and

WHEREAS, the Northampton Pride March continued annually, and in 2019, the last Pride Parade before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Northampton hosted over 40,000 participants. The celebrations honored the diversity and contributions that our LGBTQIA+ friends and neighbors have made to our community, as well as recognizing the hard-won victories like protections from discrimination in the workplace and housing, as well as equal marriage; and

WHEREAS, Pride celebrations are an important time for celebration, as well as continued vigilance and activism- especially since our LGBTQIA+ community members face increased discrimination, violence, and political efforts to roll back those hard-fought rights; and

WHEREAS, in the first 4 months of 2023 alone, over 470 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures, more than twice as many in all of last year, and Republican presidential candidates are making attacks on transgender youth and the LGBTQIA+ community central parts of their political platforms using hateful and dehumanizing rhetoric; and

WHEREAS, as we come together and celebrate today, we also stand firmly rooted in solidarity and unwavering commitment to fight for and protect each other's rights, art, expression, health, well-being, and hearts; and so

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra, do hereby proclaim May 6, 2023, as

Hampshire Pride Day

and welcome this latest incarnation of LGBTQIA+ pride in Northampton as well as all who honor the history and rights of our LGBTQIA+ friends and neighbors.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and imprinted the seal of the City of Northampton this 6th day of May 2023.




Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor