



## City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

*In the City Council, February 27, 2024*

Upon the Recommendation of:      Councilor Alex Jarrett  
   Councilor Deborah Pastrich-Klemer  
   Councilor Rachel Maiore  
   Councilor Stanley Moulton III

### **R-24.017**

#### **A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF OUR JEWISH, MUSLIM AND ARAB COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

**WHEREAS**, Northampton and its City Council have a long history of showing up on the side of equality and justice and standing up against hate and bigotry, including a resolution condemning antisemitism in our community passed unanimously in January 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, the Massachusetts chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations in November 2023 reported a 300 percent increase in anti-Muslim incidents during October compared to the same month in 2022<sup>1</sup>, a reflection of the Islamophobic rhetoric and hate incidents occurring across the United States. They include violence, threats of violence, vandalism, and retaliation against people speaking in favor of Palestinians in schools and workplaces; and

**WHEREAS**, Beit Ahavah synagogue in Florence is one of many temples in Massachusetts and the nation that have been victims of hoax bomb threats since the Israel-Hamas war began Oct. 7. Beit Ahavah was targeted Nov. 19 and again Dec. 17, the same weekend that Massachusetts State Police reported that hundreds of similar threats were received by Jewish institutions across the United States<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts in West Springfield has experienced many angry drivers passing by and shouting slogans since October, and now hires a police officer for Friday prayers. Local community members have experienced an increase in verbal threats

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cair.com/press\\_releases/cair-ma-reports-300-increase-in-calls-for-help-amid-rise-in-islamophobia/](https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-ma-reports-300-increase-in-calls-for-help-amid-rise-in-islamophobia/)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/12/17/metro/police-investigate-multiple-bomb-threats-synagogues-across-state/>

when out in the community and report a fear of wearing traditional clothing, and anti-Palestinian graffiti has been reported in Florence; and

**WHEREAS**, Congregation B'nai Israel in Northampton and Lander Grinspoon Academy report concerns for security and some express fear of wearing traditional clothing and symbols because of reported physical violence and harassment; and

**WHEREAS**, in November 2023 the Northampton City Council received antisemitic hate speech during its public comment period; and

**WHEREAS**, there is an urgent need to ensure the safety and security of Jewish, Muslim, and Arab people, including their places of worship, schools, community centers, and other institutions; and

**WHEREAS**, people of all faiths and no faith, have a stake in fighting antisemitic, Islamophobic and anti-Arab acts of hate, as we all have a stake in fighting every form of bigotry and hatred against people based on religion, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or place of birth and origin; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Northampton City Council calls on all elected officials, faith leaders and other civic leaders to stand in solidarity with our Jewish, Muslim, and Arab family, friends, neighbors and community members, reject inflammatory, threatening and violent language of all kinds, condemn and combat all manifestations of antisemitic, Islamophobic and anti-Arab actions, and affirm the rightful existence of all historically marginalized groups; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City of Northampton seeks to educate its residents about these acts of hate through public events, workshops, school curricula, and other suitable means, with the goal of making them more knowledgeable about antisemitism, Islamophobia and anti-Arab acts of hate and how they connect to racism and other forms of hate; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution be sent to Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra, the School Committee, trustees of Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, Human Rights Commission, Forbes and Lilly Libraries, and leaders of all faiths in Northampton requesting action to educate all residents about antisemitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Arab acts of hate.