

BY: M. of A. Sayegh

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 2021, as Arab American Heritage Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 2021, as Arab American Heritage Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Arab American Heritage Month; and

WHEREAS, For over a century, Arab Americans have been making valuable contributions to every aspect of American society in: medicine, law, business, technology, civic engagement, government, and culture; and

WHEREAS, Since migrating to America, people of Arab descent have shared their rich culture and traditions with neighbors and friends, while also setting fine examples of model citizens and public servants; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans have brought with them to America their resilient family values, strong work ethic, dedication to education, and diversity in faith and creed that have added strength to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, writer Ameen Rihani's 1911 masterpiece, **The Book of Khalid**, the first Arab-American novel, is an important record of Arab immigration to the Little Syria community of Lower Manhattan, and today is a powerful example of the potential of the United States to strengthen ties with the Arab world; and

WHEREAS, Arab-American poet Kahlil Gibran's masterpiece, **The Prophet**, was a transformative piece of literature, with over 100 translations, making it one of the most translated books in history and discusses topics of the human condition in the most eloquent of ways by highlighting inclusion and understanding of all peoples; and

WHEREAS, The first Arabic speaker to come to North America, Zammouri, arrived as an enslaved person from Morocco in 1528, and was an important explorer of the present-day American Southwest; and

WHEREAS, World fairs were one of many ways some Americans of Arab descent came to visit the United States from the Arab world and helped grow this State by establishing businesses in the United States and the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, The Arab American Institute estimates there are roughly 3,700,000 Arab Americans living in the United States, including over 200,000 in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, According to Census Bureau data, Arabic is one of the

fastest growing languages in the United States; and

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

WHEREAS, The incredible contributions and heritage of Arab Americans have helped us build a better Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 2021, as Arab American heritage Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York; and the student body, faculty, and staff of the Kahlil Gibran School in Yonkers, New York, the Arab American Institute in Washington D.C., and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington D.C.