

BY: Senator FLANAGAN

CONDEMNING violence, bigotry, and hateful rhetoric towards people of faith and celebrating our Nation's history of tolerance and freedom of religion and religious expression in the State of New York

WHEREAS, The victims of hate crimes and hate speech have faced physical, verbal, and emotional abuse because of their religion or perceived religion; and

WHEREAS, The constitutional right to freedom of religious practice is a cherished American value and violence or hate speech towards any community based on their faith is in contravention of our founding principles; and

WHEREAS, New York State is a community made up of many diverse religions and faiths, and both immigrants and native-born New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, New York State's diverse religious communities are recognized as having made innumerable contributions to the cultural and economic fabric and well-being of our society; and

WHEREAS, Hateful and intolerant acts against members of any religion are contrary to the American values of acceptance, welcoming, and fellowship with those of all religions, faiths, and cultures; and

WHEREAS, These acts affect not only the individual victims but also their families, communities, and the entire group whose religion or faith were the motivation for the act; and

WHEREAS, People of faith who wear faith-based clothing have been targeted because of their religious clothing; and

WHEREAS, The rise of hate speech, violence, and cultural intolerance can encourage certain individuals to react in extreme and violent ways towards religious communities; and

WHEREAS, Religious extremism that promotes violence or bigotry in the name of faith is not the property of any specific religion and must be opposed in all its forms whenever undertaken by any member of any religion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to condemn violence, bigotry, and hateful rhetoric towards members of any religious community, and to celebrate our Nation's history of tolerance towards all religions and faiths in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause further to express its condolences for the victims of all hate crimes; to steadfastly confirm

its dedication to the rights and dignity of all its citizens of all religions, faiths, and cultures; to denounce in the strongest terms the increase of intimidation, violence, vandalism, arson, and other hate crimes targeted against members of any religion or those perceived to be members of any religion, towards institutions of worship, and religious community centers; and to recognize that the religious communities in New York State have made countless positive contributions to our society; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body declares that the civil rights and civil liberties of people of all religions and faiths should be protected and preserved; supports law enforcement authorities to work to prevent hate crimes and to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law those perpetrators of hate crimes; and reaffirms the inalienable right of every individual to live without fear and intimidation, and to practice their freedom of religion.