Senate Resolution No. 862

BY: Senator BRESLIN

CONGRATULATING Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen upon the occasion of his retirement after 38 years of distinguished service to the Congregation Beth Emeth

WHEREAS, It is with great admiration and deepest respect that this Legislative Body is moved to pay tribute to an eminent gentleman of indomitable spirit and dedication, whose purposeful life and accomplishments will forever stand as an inspiration to others; and

WHEREAS, The character and richness of religious and community life in this noble Empire State is nourished and fulfilled through the faithful concern and selfless devotion of those who would commit their energies and purpose to the ministry of others; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to congratulate Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen upon the occasion of his retirement after 38 years of distinguished service as Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Emeth; and

WHEREAS, Since 1985, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen has served the Congregation Beth Emeth in Albany, New York; during that time he has forged enduring connections and relationships with congregants, the Jewish community, and the broader Capital District community; and

WHEREAS, Committed to Judaism from a young age, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen spent many summers at Jewish summer camps with teachings from the Reform Movement and participated in the Eisendrath International Exchange Program, where the Rabbi was able to spend a semester at the Leo Baeck High School in Haifa, Israel; and

WHEREAS, Following his high school studies, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen was awarded a Certificate in Jewish Education from Gratz College in Philadelphia, New York, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Judaic Studies from the University of Michigan in 1979, and a Masters of Arts Degree in Hebrew Letters in 1983 from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in Cincinnati, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen was ordained in 1984 by the Hebrew Union College; one year later, he joined Congregation Beth Emeth as Assistant Rabbi and became the Senior Rabbi in 1992; and

WHEREAS, In 1988, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen completed the St. Peter's Hospital Program in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in Albany NY; in May of 2009, in recognition of the Rabbi's 25th anniversary of rabbinic ordination, Rabbi Scott L. Spheen was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from HUC-JIR; and

WHEREAS, As a compassionate leader, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen has made life cycle events a cornerstone of the congregational experience, allowing members to share their joys together and comfort each other in sorrow; and

WHEREAS, Working collaboratively with clergy, lay leaders, and professional staff, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen guided Congregation Beth Emeth through the COVID-19 pandemic by making services and educational opportunities available on the internet to those unable to attend in person due to social distancing; this effort enabled the Congregation to maintain strong connections during this difficult time; and

WHEREAS, The Religious School, Torah Study and life-long learning at Congregation Beth Emeth have all been enhanced under Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen's devoted leadership; he has strengthened connections to members in Florida, led 10 congregational trips to Israel, Eastern Europe, and Spain, beautified the building of the Congregation and strengthened the connection to history by bringing a Holocaust Torah Scroll for members; and

WHEREAS, Amply demonstrating his commitment to the broader Jewish community, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen has served in many positions of leadership including as a member of the board of the Sidney Albert Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Services, the Daughters of Sarah Nursing Center, the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York, Park Playhouse, The Martin Luther & Coretta Scott King Lecture at Siena College, the Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, Jewish Family Services of Northeastern New York, the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Lecture Board of the College of Saint Rose and the Admissions Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), and for many years, was Jewish Chaplain at the Parsons School in Albany, New York; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen served as President of the Capital District Board of Rabbis and Cantors for two terms in both 1990 and 2008; he is also the past President of the Rabbinic Alumni Association of HUC-JIR, of B'nai B'rith Gideon Lodge No. 140, and the Buckingham Mews Homeowners Association; and

WHEREAS, With his unwavering dedication to his community, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen served on the Albany County Ethics Commission and on the Human Rights Commission for the City of Albany; he offered the invocations at both the 2016 meeting of the New York State Electoral College and the 2017 State of the State; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen has participated in numerous cultural and civic venues, including, the Albany Symphony, Capital Reparatory Theatre and Park Playhouse; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen's tireless work on interfaith programs for the Capital Region was recognized with the 2016 Rev. Dr. Carlyle Adams Ecumenical/Interfaith Award by the Capital Area Council of Churches; and

WHEREAS, Supporting his successful endeavors throughout the years, have been his wife Susan Balan of 31 years, who was the Executive Director of the Sidney Albert Albany Jewish Community Center, their children Hilary and Adam, and five grandchildren, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen's life and rejoice in

his achievements; and

WHEREAS, This distinguished man of God has always given enlightenment, guidance and wisdom to the many entrusted to his care and has administered abundantly and unstintingly to the spiritual and corporal needs of all; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen has brought to his ministry an overwhelming spirit of charity and compassion, acting from vision and enlightenment in conducting his administrative and spiritual duties, while always displaying the highest standards of personal and professional integrity and dedication; and

WHEREAS, It has always been the objective of this Legislative Body to honor and support those individuals who have displayed their commitment to the betterment of their communities, and Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen is truly an eminent gentlemen of indomitable spirit and dedication; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to congratulate Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen upon the occasion of his retirement, and to note the significance of his unremitted dedication and sagacious leadership on behalf of Congregation Beth Emeth in Albany, New York after 38 years of distinguished service; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen.