

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Designating April 10 as "Stronger Than Hate Day" in Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, On October 27, 2018, tragedy struck Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood, which is home to a vibrant, diverse and loving Jewish community; and

WHEREAS, Several different Jewish houses of worship including Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Conservative and Reform have long been a part of the fabric of that community; and

WHEREAS, The Tree of Life synagogue building is home to three congregations, Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha, New Light and Dor Hadash, each with its own distinct voice and faithful community of thinkers and worshippers; and

WHEREAS, The coexistence of disparate congregations in the Tree of Life building offered a spiritual place for a diverse population of Jews living in Squirrel Hill and Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, With the exception of New York City, Pittsburgh is the last Jewish community in the United States in which the majority of its members still reside within the city, largely because of the still-flourishing cultural and religious life of the Squirrel Hill neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, As the popularity of the Squirrel Hill neighborhood has grown, it has become a community that enjoys ethnic and religious diversity, both holding onto its Jewish identity and history and celebrating the gifts that new populations bring; and

WHEREAS, While the General Assembly must remember in sorrow the tragedy of the loss of 11 souls, we should also celebrate their lives, their contributions to their community and the family and friends who loved them; and

WHEREAS, Joyce Fienberg, who was a retired researcher at the University of Pittsburgh and a community volunteer, was known for her willingness to pitch in and help anywhere that she saw a need; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Richard Gottfried, was known for providing free dental care to refugees and immigrants, his love of golf, reading, running and fine wine; and

WHEREAS, Rose Mallinger, known as “Bubbie” by all of her relatives, who worshipped at the Tree of Life Synagogue for more than 60 years, was 97 years old and amazed all who encountered her with her energy; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz was known for his bowties, his laugh and for being a skilled and compassionate doctor whose practice was a safe place for HIV patients in the early years of the disease; and

WHEREAS, Cecil Rosenthal, described as the “honorary mayor of Squirrel Hill,” was known for his concern for others and his love of swimming; and

WHEREAS, David Rosenthal was known for his strong work ethic and his love of anything related to the police or fire department, and while the Rosenthal brothers lived with intellectual disabilities, that did not stop them from having rich, full lives that brought joy to all who encountered them; and

WHEREAS, Bernice Simon, a former nurse, died along side of the love of her life, husband Sylvan Simon, a veteran and a retired accountant, and the two of them

were known for their sweet, funny banter with one another and their love of the symphony; and

WHEREAS, Dan Stein, who was a salesman for a plumbing supply company, a driver for a funeral home and a former substitute teacher, was known for being quick to help others, unpretentious and a great fundraiser for his congregation; and

WHEREAS, Melvin “Mel” Wax, was an accountant who after retirement made use of his unique abilities with numbers to track Pittsburgh Pirates statistics and was known for his quick, silly humor and his commitment to attending services every single week; and

WHEREAS, Irving “Irv” Younger, who owned a realty company and was a former high school baseball coach, was known for his delight at becoming a grandfather and his willingness to help a stranger; and

WHEREAS, On the morning of October 27, 2018 the victims mentioned above and their fellow worshippers were beginning services or setting up for their activities at the Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha synagogue building; and

WHEREAS, Then a gunman entered these congregations and killed 11 citizens of this Commonwealth in the largest deadly act of anti-Semitism in United States history; and

WHEREAS, Andrea Wedner and Daniel Leger each suffered gunshot wounds and survived; and

WHEREAS, Due the courageous response by law enforcement, first responders and local medical professionals, lives were saved; and

WHEREAS, Officers Daniel Mead, Michael Smidga, Anthony Burke, Timothy Matson, John Persin, and Tyler Pashel were injured as they attempted to stop the shooter; and

WHEREAS, The Jewish Community Center immediately made itself the central contact point for families of victims and others affected by the attack, creating a comfortable place for devastated community members to access information and services amidst the confusion; and

WHEREAS, Jewish Family and Community Services marshalled mental health resources to provide the entire community with counseling services, making therapists available for individuals and dispatching mental health professionals to schools, medical facilities, senior centers and more; and

WHEREAS, Just hours after the attack, thousands of Pennsylvanians converged on the streets of Squirrel Hill and individuals and groups across the world responded to this tragedy to pray, mourn, demonstrate and support those in need; and

WHEREAS, The American Jewish Committee responded to the attack by asking Jews and non-Jews to “Show up for Shabbat,” and synagogues throughout the world welcomed in strangers of all faiths to share their heartbreak and show solidarity against anti-Semitism; and

WHEREAS, The Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, the broader Muslim community and so many diverse communities throughout the region reached out with compassion and wholehearted support in a way that showed the world that acts of violence will only serve to further unite faithful people across religions and traditions; and

WHEREAS, In the painful aftermath of the attack, the singular phrase that arose from the heartbroken city of Pittsburgh became “Stronger Than Hate”; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the first responders, Rabbis, staff, lay leadership and hundreds of members of these synagogues who helped their family and friends; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the doctors, nurses and countless medical professionals who treated the injured; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the Rabbis and volunteers of the two Chevrah Kadisha, or burial societies, that sanctified the dead; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh and Jewish Family and Community Services of Pittsburgh and the countless volunteers and donors of every faith and background in Squirrel Hill and reaching around the world; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the General Assembly designate April 10, 2019, as "Stronger Than Hate Day" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the General Assembly honors the 11 Pennsylvanians who lost their lives and made significant contributions to their communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the General Assembly recognize the wounded, the survivors and the family and friends who have personally and intensely felt the senseless tragedy of these few minutes of mass violence; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the General Assembly stands against the violent hatred shown toward fellow Pennsylvanians and others on the basis of religion or targeted at those who seek to pray peacefully in the House of worship of their choice; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the congregations of Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha, New Light, and Dor Hadash and that the families of Joyce Fienberg, Dr. Richard Gottfried, , Rose Mallinger, Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil and David Rosenthal, Bernice and Sylvan Simon, Dan Stein, Melvin Wax and Irving Younger.