Legislation Details

File #:	22-2823 **Version:** 1	**Name:**	
Type:	Consent Calendar Resolution	**Status:**	Approved
File created:	4/7/2022	**In control:**	Board of Commissioners
On agenda:	4/7/2022	**Final action:**	4/7/2022
Title:	PROPOSED RESOLUTION		

RESOLUTION AGAINST THE RISE IN ANTI-SEMITISM AND IN SUPPORT OF COOK COUNTY'S JEWISH POPULATION

WHEREAS, a documented disturbing rise in anti-Semitic events targeting the Jewish population has surged throughout the United States, and significantly in Cook County; and

WHEREAS, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents, there were 1,879 recorded attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions across the country in 2018, which increased to 2,024 recorded antisemitic incidents in 2020. In Illinois, residents saw a 350% increase in anti-Semitic incidents between 2016 and 2020; and

WHEREAS, according to the FBI, anti-Jewish bias accounted for 57% of religiously motivated hate crimes in 2020, even though Jews only account for less than 2% of the U.S. population. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and community lock-down, this percentage is up from 2015 when 51.3% of religiously motivated hate crime offenses targeted Jews or Jewish institutions; and

WHEREAS, anti-Semitic propaganda and hate crimes are meant to stoke hatred of Jews among non-Jews and cause Jewish residents to feel they are unwelcome and unsafe in the community; and

WHEREAS, in the first three months of 2022, Jewish communities have faced incidents of leaflet drops, vandalism, broken glass, presence of swastikas, verbal attacks, and physical assaults, which are meant to instill psychological distress, fear, and anxiety; and

WHEREAS, Chicago's Orthodox Jewish community in West Rogers Park was targeted with eight known incidents of hate from January 13 through February 1, 2022. These are days surrounding International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, which triggered associations of Kristallnacht ("the Night of Broken Glass") for Holocaust survivors and their descendants, where the Nazi's anti-Semitic policies turned exceptionally violent. These incidents included:

· On January 13, 2022, a man approached Orthodox Jewish middle school students and a teacher outside of the Yeshivas Tiferes Tzvi school and screamed "all of you should be killed" as he passed by; and
· On January 29, 2022, during Shabbat, a man smashed the window of the Kol Tuv Kosher Foods store and shattered the front door of the Tel Aviv Kosher Bakery next door; the non-Jewish stores on the block were not touched; and
· On January 30, 2022, yellow swastikas were spray-painted on the Hanna Sacks Bais Yaakov all-female high school and the Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe or F.R.E.E. Synagogue, a synagogue that has supported Ukrainian and Russian Jewish refugees since 1973; and
· On January 30, 2022, an Orthodox Jewish man was physically assaulted near the F.R.E.E. Synagogue by a man who hurled racial slurs at him; and
· On February 1, 2022, three men in a van verbally threatened a man in the Bnei Ruven synagogue parking lot and later smashed his and other congregants' car windows; and
· From January 29 to February 1, 2022, Congregation K.I.N.S. of West Rogers Park and the all-male Orthodox Jewish high school Yeshivas Meor Ha Torah were also vandalized; and

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WHEREAS, in March 2022, anti-Semitic flyers were found in plastic bags containing rocks, beans, or rice, and were left in Cook County residents' front yards and in public parks in Niles, Park Ridge, Glenview, Skokie, and Arlington Heights, Illinois. These flyers contained anti-Semitic tropes that Jews control the world and allege that the "Covid Agenda," Biden Administration, and the war in Ukraine, are part of a Jewish global conspiracy. The flyers list names of people in the Government believed to be Jewish and include photos and images of the Israeli flag next to many of the names. Some of the flyers also allege that Jews control the North Shore, Cook County Sheriff's Police, and Cook County government officials; and

WHEREAS, anti-Semitic hate crimes have been documented across Illinois, including:

· On March 18, 2022, a bomb threat was made to the North Suburban Beth El Synagogue in Highland Park; and
· Threats to Jewish Day Care facilities in and around Skokie, Illinois; and
· Anti-Semitic and white-supremacy propaganda was distributed at Eastern Illinois University, University of Illinois-Urbana, and Lake Land College; and

WHEREAS, incidents of anti-Jewish hate and violence have occurred across the United States, with events in the first three months this year including:

· On January 15, 2022, congregants and a rabbi who were peacefully praying at a synagogue during Shabbat in Colleyville, Texas were held hostage for ten hours by a terrorist attempting to free another terrorist from federal prison, causing panic for Jewish worshippers' safety nationwide; and
· On January 30, 2022, a neo-Nazi group held a rally in Orlando where people wore Nazi-gear, waved swastika flags, shouted "Heil Hitler" and claimed that "Jews rape children and drink their blood;" and
· Dozens of incidents of swastikas found in public areas including for example: a Middle School play area in Alaska, to a post office bathroom in New York, an elementary school in Oregon, a college residential hall in Massachusetts, a park in Iowa, a mural in Arkansas, and a cemetery in Pennsylvania; and
· Since the beginning of March, there have been at least 18 reported bomb threats directed against synagogues and Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) across the United States; and
· Flyers reminiscent of Nazi-style propaganda have been littered in as many as 19 states throughout the United States including: Oregon, California, Montana, Utah, Colorado, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, New York, and Maryland; and

WHEREAS, while there is more work to be done, Cook County works to prevent, intervene, and investigate Hate Crimes. The Commission on Human Rights and Ethics participates in the Interagency Hate Crime Coalition. The Cook County Sheriff's Office regularly dedicates resources in the form of patrol cars, officers, and public education to protect all residents from hate crimes, including specifically dedicating officers to protect synagogues when they are threatened; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Cook County Board of Commissioners strongly condemn the hateful acts made against those of the Jewish faith and their institutions and affirm that all people deserve the right to be secure and respected; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Cook County Board of Commissioners encourage schools across the County to take comprehensive advantage of the Holocaust and Genocide Study requirement by the State of Illinois Act Concerning Schools (HB0312); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Cook County Board of Commissioners and the Cook County Sheriff are dedicated to protecting all residents of the County from hate crimes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Cook County Board of Commissioners commits to working to reverse the profound ignorance displayed in these acts of hate and ensure the County embraces and supports diverse, inclusive, and equitable communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Cook County Board of Commissioners encourage all residents of Cook County to unite in opposition to anti-Semitic hate and instead spread peace and love...end

Sponsors: SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, BRIDGET GAINER, BILL LOWRY, DONNA MILLER, KEVIN B. MORRISON, PETER N. SILVESTRI, LARRY SUFFREDIN, FRANK J. AGUILAR, ALMA E. ANAYA, LUIS ARROYO JR, DENNIS DEER, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BRANDON JOHNSON, STANLEY MOORE, SEAN M. MORRISON, DEBORAH SIMS

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Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/7/2022	1	Board of Commissioners	approve	Pass

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