

Proclamation

Whereas, April is National Arab American Heritage Month and this year's theme is "Celebrating Arab American Resilience and Diversity"; and

Whereas, Arab Americans have enriched our nation's fabric throughout history with their language, traditions, and cultural expressions. The Arabic language serves as a unifying thread, linking the diverse geographies and cultures of 3.5 million Arab Americans, whose ancestries stretch from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, and Yemen and Sudan in the south. And California is home to more than 700,000 Arab Americans, the largest Arab American population of the fifty states (UCSF Office of Diversity and Outreach); and

Whereas, the Biden Administration recently finalized the addition of a new "Middle Eastern and North African" option for the 2030 Census and other forms that ask for people's race and ethnicity, to help ensure that Arab Americans are seen, counted, and fully represented as new policies and funding opportunities are created; and

Whereas, people of Arab heritage are among the many immigrants who have come to our country's shores from a range of cultures, customs, backgrounds, and beliefs, yet all sharing a common courage to start new chapters in an unfamiliar land. "As they built their lives, they helped build America — from serving the cause of freedom during World War II to helping build cities and communities across our Nation, often in the face of discrimination and hate." (White House Proclamation Recognizing Arab American Heritage Month); and

Whereas, this legacy of courage, resilience, and service lives on today in Arab Americans across our country who are engineers, scientists, medical professionals, lawyers, business owners and entrepreneurs, educators, first responders, artists, athletes, community leaders, military service members, and public servants, from members of Congress to local elected officials; and

Whereas, President Joe Biden, in his 2024 Proclamation on Arab American Heritage Month (Proclamation), stated, As we honor the contributions of Arab Americans, "we must also pause to reflect on the pain being felt in the Arab American community [because of] the war in Gaza. The trauma, death, and destruction in Gaza have claimed, and continue to claim, far too many innocent lives, including family and friends of Arab Americans across our Nation." (White House Proclamation); and

Whereas, in his Proclamation President Biden also expressed the need to respond to the "urgent humanitarian crisis, deliver desperately needed aid to Gaza, free the hostages taken during the brutal Hamas terrorist attack on October 7th, and establish an immediate ceasefire . . . which we would work to build into something more enduring." President Biden said, "We must preserve the space for peace — for a . . . solution with equal measures of security and dignity for both Palestinians and Israelis . . . for a just and lasting peace." (White House Proclamation); and

Whereas, the President's Proclamation further acknowledges our responsibility as a Nation to fight against the rise of all forms of hate, including against Arab Americans, recognizing that, "Arab Americans remain the target of bias and discrimination — including harassment, hate crimes, racist rhetoric, and violent attacks. Citing the recent stabbing death of a six-year old Palestinian boy whose mother was also stabbed by their landlord, a young man stabbed near a college campus after attending a pro-Palestinian protest, and three Palestinian college students who were shot, one of whom is now paralyzed, while walking down a street wearing keffiyehs and speaking Arabic, President Biden said, "We must recommit to the promise of America by honoring and advancing the dignity, equity, and security of Arab Americans. (White House Proclamation)

Whereas, the resilience, diversity, and contributions of Arab Americans embody the truth that diversity has been, and always will be, our country's greatest strength.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, do hereby proclaim April 2024 as

Arab American Heritage Month

in the City of Alameda, and call upon all Alamedans to learn more about the history, culture, and achievements of Arab Americans, by reading books by Arab American authors, trying a tasty Arabic recipe, learning more about Arabic artists and filmmakers, and supporting local Arab American businesses.

To honor Arab American Heritage Month, the Alameda Free Library is offering a Book Club reading of "Against the Loveless World" by Susan Abulhawa on Monday, April 8 from 5:30 to 7 PM, and a Movie Night screening of "Breaking Fast" on Wednesday, April 24 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Both events take place at the Main Library.



Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Mayor

