

2017-J3162

Senate Resolution No. 3162

BY: Senator KENNEDY

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo, New York

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, It is the tradition of New York State and our nation to pay tribute to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the ethical and spiritual values of their communities; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo, New York; and

WHEREAS, For five decades, Temple Beth Zion has strived to enrich Jewish lives, promote Jewish values, strengthen Jewish bonds and foster lifelong learning; the congregation celebrates the rich diversity of its Jewish community, preserves sacred traditions while encouraging innovation, and affirms its Judaism through both words and deeds; and

WHEREAS, From its first meeting at the home of Hirsch Sinzheimer on Oak Street in Buffalo in 1850, Temple Beth Zion has grown into one of the oldest and largest Reform congregations in Western New York; originally established as an Orthodox congregation, it was reorganized

as a Reform congregation in 1863; and

WHEREAS, In 1864, Temple Beth Zion purchased its first building, a Methodist Episcopal Church on Niagara Street; after extensive redecorating, the synagogue was officially dedicated the following year; and

WHEREAS, Under the leadership of its second Rabbi, Samson Falk, the congregation joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873; almost 20 years later, then Rabbi Israel Aaron, purchased land at 599 Delaware Avenue; the new temple was spectacular and was distinguishable from any other church in the area; and

WHEREAS, Under the helm of the next Rabbi, Louis J. Kopald, Temple Beth Zion expanded its facilities, and organized its first men's club and Young People's Society; and

WHEREAS, From 1926-1958, the congregation was led by Rabbi Joseph L. Fink, a gifted and outstanding spokesman who was known to thousands of people through his Humanitarian Hour radio program; and

WHEREAS, In 1958, Martin L. Goldberg became the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Zion; in that year, the congregation dedicated a second facility in suburban Amherst, primarily to meet the growing classroom needs of its members and their children; and

WHEREAS, After a fire destroyed the Delaware Avenue temple, a new building at 805 Delaware was dedicated in April of 1967; this

magnificent building has become one of Buffalo's prominent landmarks; and

WHEREAS, Throughout Rabbi Goldberg's tenure, Temple Beth Zion served approximately 1,700 households and the congregation established the Rabbi Martin L. Goldberg Endowment Fund; and

WHEREAS, After taking over in 1994, Rabbi Ronne Friedman began a period of rebirth for Temple Beth Zion; he was instrumental in growing membership, improving finances, and adding new programs; and

WHEREAS, To better serve younger families who primarily reside in the northern suburbs, the Sweet Home Road building was rededicated in November of 1998 as the Aaron and Bertha Broder Center for Jewish Education; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld took over the helm of Temple Beth Zion; under his leadership, the congregation established its multi-faith social action program, an active Caring Community, and the Rabbi Joseph and Janice Fink Legacy Society; and

WHEREAS, Temple Beth Zion was proudly chosen as one of 13 synagogues featured in films exploring the post-World War II role of synagogues in the United States created for the new National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Today, under the luminous direction of Rabbi Gary Pokras, Temple Beth Zion has begun to grow again and continues to be a source of great strength and pride in the Buffalo Jewish Community; and

WHEREAS, Temple Beth Zion stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades while retaining that spiritual resolve which characterizes its past; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of

enduring religious institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Temple Beth Zion.