



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris, Hellenic State Legislators Celebrate Greek Independence Day In NYS Capitol, Welcome Archbishop Elpidophoros To Albany

MICHAEL GIANARIS March 24, 2023

| ISSUE: **GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY, GREEK HISTORY MONTH, ASTORIA, GREEK AMERICANS**



ALBANY, N.Y. – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris, Senator Andr  Gounardes, Senator James Skoufis, Assembly Member Michael Tannousis, and Assembly Member John Lemondes honored Greek Independence at the State Capitol on Wednesday, welcoming His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, who offered invocations before both houses of the state legislature. The anniversary of Greek Independence was also observed with the passage of a [resolution \(J.580\)](#) proclaiming March as Greek History Month in New York State.

“As the son of Greek immigrants, I hold very close to my heart the Greek-American experience,” said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. “This is a perfect time to recognize the sacrifices of those who came before us and to celebrate the Hellenic values that have influenced the rest of the world.”

“It was an honor to welcome His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros to the State Capitol as we honored Greek Independence this week,” said **Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “As a fourth-generation Greek-American, it is not just the history of Greek independence I am proud to celebrate this month, but also the contributions of the Greek-American community to our nation.”

“I am grateful to the Archbishop for his invocation and his leadership, spiritual and otherwise, and to my fellow Greek-American legislators for their partnership,” said **Senator James Skoufis**. “Greek Independence Day allows us to reflect on the many contributions -- in democracy, science, theater, philosophy, and so many other aspects of our day-to-day lives – of those who came before us. I’ll always be proud of my heritage.”

“Welcoming His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros to the Chambers and recognizing the significance of his visit is one of the greatest honors of my life,” said **Assembly Member John Lemondes**. “As a 2<sup>nd</sup>-generation Greek American, whose grandparents were both direct survivors of the Pontian Greek, Armenian/Assyrian Genocide, I am always conscious of the gift I have been given to be born here, which is a direct result of their survival. I will never forget how important it is for Greek Americans to keep alive the spirit that our ancestors wrenched their own freedom with. This is what heavily influenced my decision to serve our country in its military, with further representative service in government, keeping alive and being motivated by the spirit of Philotimo.”

“It was a pleasure to have Archbishop Elpidophoros and members of the Greek-American and Cypriot-American communities with me in the chamber for such a momentous time in the 2023 Legislative Session,” said **Assembly Member Michael Tannousis**. “New York State is home to thousands of Greek-Americans who attend their local churches in various parts of the state to practice their religion and to stay connected to their culture. I am proud to be a first-generation Cypriot-American and the son of refugees. I am thankful to my parents who left their homeland and

came to the land of opportunity to work tremendously hard for the American dream. In honor of Greek Independence Day, we say long live Greece! Zito I Ellas! (???? ? ?????!).”

The Senate resolution proclaiming March as Greek History Month highlights the 202<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Greek Independence on March 25th. Greek Independence Day commemorates the date when Greece declared independence from the Ottoman Empire and began the Greek War of Independence in 1821.

**About Archbishop Elpidophoros:** His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Most Honorable Exarch of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, is the eighth Archbishop of America elected since the establishment of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in 1922.

Photos of the Greek-American legislators, and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, with the Archbishop are available [here](#). Video of the Archbishop’s Senate invocation is available [here](#). Video of Senator Gianaris’ floor speech on the resolution is available [here](#).