

**No. R-42. House concurrent resolution congratulating Congregation Beth El of Bennington as it commences its second century.**

(H.C.R.38)

Offered by: Representatives Campion of Bennington, Corcoran of Bennington, Mook of Bennington, Miller of Shaftsbury, Morrissey of Bennington, Botzow of Pownal, Browning of Arlington, Komline of Dorset, Wilson of Manchester and Moran of Wardsboro

Offered by: Senators Sears and Hartwell

Whereas, in 1909, the Hebrew Congregation of Bennington was created to facilitate Jewish religious worship and observance and social association opportunities for the growing local Jewish community, and

Whereas, the new congregation enthusiastically conducted religious services and other events at temporary locations in Bennington but optimistically looked forward to the construction of a synagogue to serve as its permanent home, and

Whereas, patience was required in achieving this dream, but the Jewish community's aspirations were realized when, on July 29, 1923, the eagerly awaited synagogue, located at the corner of Adams and North Streets, was dedicated at a festive ceremony at which clergy of other faiths and Lt. Governor Franklin Billings were in attendance, and

Whereas, the Hebrew Congregation of Bennington prospered for much of the 20th century, but by the 1980s, the synagogue was minimally used and in need of major building repairs, and

Whereas, a small but devoted group of Jewish community members decided to revive the synagogue as the Jewish population of the greater Bennington area, including nearby Massachusetts and New York, was on the rise, and

Whereas, to best serve the theological outlook of the community, the decision was made to affiliate with the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement, and

Whereas, the structurally and spiritually revived synagogue was renamed Congregation Beth El, meaning house of God, and

Whereas, under the leadership of Rabbi Howard Cohen, Congregation Beth El inaugurated a variety of Sabbath and Jewish holiday worship services, educational programs, and social events, and

Whereas, Congregation Beth El takes great pride in its role as an active member of the Bennington Interfaith Council, including participation in the Bennington Food and Fuel Fund and the Bennington Retreat, and the congregation hosts a monthly meal for those in need of nourishment, and

Whereas, today, with its new spiritual leader, Rabbi Joshua Boettiger, whose commitment to a rabbinic life was crystallized when, as a Jew studying in Syria, he was required to hide his faith, Congregation Beth El is a proud and thriving Jewish synagogue, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Congregation Beth El of Bennington as it commences its second century, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Congregation Beth El in Bennington.