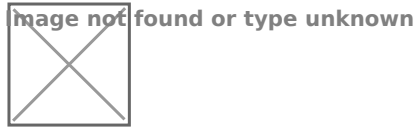


New York State Assembly and Senate Pass Resolutions Recognizing March 2023 as Greek History Month



On March 22, 2023, the New York State Assembly and Senate passed resolutions recognizing March 2023 as Greek History Month in the state of New York. In honor of this historic recognition, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America offered the invocation at each of today's legislative sessions.

His Eminence also met with Governor Kathy Hochul, whom he thanked for the state's long-time support of the rebuilding of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at Ground Zero. The Archbishop and Governor Hochul also discussed their shared commitment to working together on challenges like substance addiction, poverty, and youth mental health. His Eminence later met with Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie.

In the afternoon, the state's legislators of Hellenic and Cypriot descent— Senators Michael Gianaris, Andrew Gounardes, and James Skoufis and Assembly Members Michael Tannousis and John Lemondes— co-hosted a luncheon with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Order of AHEPA in the Capitol for the occasion. They also honored a number of Greek Americans for their service as members of both the diaspora and their broader communities in New York and the United States. Among them were: Mr. Jim Tampakis, Ms. Despina Ioannou Axiotakis, Colonel Ted Limpert, and Mr. Philip Christopher (not present).

Consul Generals of the Hellenic Republic and Cyprus in New York, Mr. Konstantinos Konstantinou and Mr. Michalis Firillas, also offered reflections on the historic solidarity and shared values of the United States, Greece, and Cyprus, noting that, in many cases around the globe, like those of Ukraine and Cyprus, the struggle for freedom and democracy continues.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros offered the invocation and benediction for the luncheon, and echoed the Honorable Consul General's in his final remarks:

"Today, we come together to memorialize the date of March 25, 1821 - the Fourth of July for all Hellenes. It is a date that coincides with one of the greatest religious observances of our Faith - the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary. And this coincidence is a profound reminder of the nature of human liberty - the ability to choose, free from coercion or compulsion.

"When we look at our world today, and we see how the rights of individuals can be trampled underfoot by regimes more interested in their own power than the enrichment of their citizens, as Greek-Americans, we give thanks to Almighty God for the Birthplace of Democracy - our precious Hellas, and Democracy's greatest achievement - the United States of America.

"Our gathering here today, within the Legislative House of all the People of the Empire State, reminds us that each of us - clergy and laity, women and men, public servants and private individuals - all have a responsibility to ensure that future generations have the same privileges, rights and opportunities that we have. We are always forming a 'more perfect union' that is based on the inclusion of diverse communities who aspire to live in peace and harmony with one another....May God bless us all, and keep free forevermore the Peoples of Greece, Cyprus, the Great State of New York, and the American Nation," His Eminence said.

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