

## 2015-J4001

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Rabbi Michael Weisser upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the National Action Network, West Nassau Chapter, on April 17, 2016

WHEREAS, Individuals who give of their time and energies and serve the best interests of their communities are an asset beyond remuneration and cannot be sufficiently extolled; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Michael Weisser has given not only of his time and energies but also of his competence, intelligence and leadership and consequently has been designated for special honor; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Rabbi Michael Weisser upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the National Action Network, West Nassau Chapter, to be celebrated at its 3rd Annual Women's Prestigious Gala Awards Dinner held on Sunday, April 17, 2016, at the Chateau Briand Caterers in Carle Place, New York; and

WHEREAS, The National Action Network's Annual Women's Prestigious Gala Awards Dinner recognizes outstanding individuals who demonstrate excellence in their work, service, and commitment to the Jewish, Nigerian, Caribbean, Spanish, Haitian and American communities; and

WHEREAS, The West Nassau Chapter, under the able leadership of District Chairperson, Pastor Emmanuel Asse, continues the mission of NAN which fulfills a vital role in moving our Nation forward; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Michael Weisser studied at Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Institute of Religion and the Rabbinical Academy of America; he is ordained as a Rabbi and Cantor, and certified as an educator; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Michael Weisser is the respected spiritual leader of the Free Synagogue of Flushing (FSF) in Queens, New York; for the past eight years, he has focused on the Jewish value of welcoming the stranger, while continuing FSF's tradition of embracing freedom, diversity, and its surrounding community; and

WHEREAS, Prior to his arrival in Queens, Rabbi Michael Weisser served as Rabbi of both Beth Shalom Synagogue in Auckland, New Zealand, and Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Lincoln, Nebraska; he also taught in the

Philosophy and Religion Department of the Nebraska Wesleyan University for 11 years; and

WHEREAS, During his time of service in Nebraska, this esteemed religious leader and his family were threatened by the Grand Dragon of the area Ku Klux Klan; in response, Rabbi Michael Weisser reached out to the klansman behind the threats, befriended him, and inspired the man to change his life from one of hatred and bigotry to one of love and tolerance; this story became the subject of the book, NOT BY THE SWORD: HOW A CANTOR AND HIS FAMILY TRANSFORMED A KLANSMAN; and

WHEREAS, Recently, Rabbi Michael Weisser has participated in the planning and execution of the Queens Unity Walk, and was involved in former Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Interfaith Breakfast; he is also working on the creation of an Interfaith Council which will serve the Queens community; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of numerous awards and honors for his outstanding service, Rabbi Michael Weisser has been named Person of the Year by both the Lincoln Interfaith Counsel and NAACP Nebraska, Man of the Year by ACLU Nebraska, Ecumenical Person of the Year by the United Methodist Church, and a Pax Christi National Peacemaker; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Rabbi Michael Weisser has received an honorary doctorate from Hebrew Union College and a Yogyakarta, Indonesia Citation for Interfaith Understanding; he was also named an official delegate by

the Government of New Zealand at its Dialogue for Religious Harmony and Cooperation; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the entire period of his community service, a period of constructive involvement, Rabbi Michael Weisser has stood constant in dignity, good grace and humor; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the impressive dedication shown by an individual for the benefit of others which Rabbi Michael Weisser has displayed throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Rabbi Michael Weisser upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the National Action Network, West Nassau Chapter;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Rabbi Michael Weisser, and Pastor Emmanuel Asse, National Action Network, West Nassau Chapter.