



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Andrew Gounardes

Statement: Senator Andrew Gounardes Applauds State Funding for Mother Cabrini Statue

ANDREW GOUNARDES October 15, 2019

| ISSUE: [COMMUNITY ARTS](#), [LANDMARKS](#), [BROOKLYN](#), [RELIGION](#)

OP-ED

Honoring Mother Cabrini with a public statue

After a city controversy, New York State will now step in to fund a statue of Mother Cabrini, America's first saint, who founded dozens of good works institutions in the U.S. and beyond. I applaud this decision, and am glad she will be honored with a statue.

Mother Cabrini made it her life's work to set up schools, hospitals, orphanages and novitiates to help alleviate the poverty conditions that hundreds of thousands of immigrants, many of the Italian-American, faced in the late 1800s.

She did this in New York City and in major cities across the United States. Through strong will and persistence, she fought to help new Americans build a better life, get education and healthcare, and ascend out of poverty.

When New York City announced the worthy goal of making public art more fair

and accurate by creating several statues to honor remarkable women, Mother Cabrini was not selected — despite the fact that she received double the nominations of anyone else being considered.

The She Built NYC Commission, which made the selection, states on its website that its goal is to honor "pioneering women by installing monuments that celebrate their extraordinary contributions to the city and beyond."

Mother Cabrini certainly meets that standard. She exemplified selflessness and generosity towards those in need, and, in an age of xenophobia, reminds us of New York's rich history as a city of immigrants.

The mayor has publicly stated that the



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commission's decisions weren't based on top vote-getters. This raises the question of what standard it was using, and why it held a public vote only to eschew the results.

In August, I wrote a letter to the mayor and the commission urging him to reverse course and expressing that the voices of New Yorkers should not have been ignored.

I believed then, as I do now, that the commission should have listened to the people and elected to build a statue of Mother Cabrini. Following the decision, many elected officials also urged the mayor to honor Mother Cabrini with a statue, including Councilmember Justin Brannan and Rep. Max Rose, as did members

of the Italian-American and Catholic communities.

Following the controversy, Governor Cuomo recently announced that the state will now step in to fund a statue of Mother Cabrini. He has appointed a commission and is allocating the funds to ensure the statue gets built.

I strongly approve of this decision. I look forward to seeing the statue of Mother Cabrini and seeing her honored in her rightful place as one of the incredible women who helped build our great city.

State Sen. Andrew Gounardes represents the 22nd S.D. in Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach, Bensonhurst, Gravesend, Homecrest, Manhattan Beach, Marine Park, Gerritsen Beach, as well as portions of Sheephead Bay, Borough Park, and Midwood.

Brooklyn, NY -- The following statement can be attributed to Senator Andrew Gounardes (D-Brooklyn):

"I am glad to hear that the state will fund a statue of Mother Cabrini, an incredible woman in history who helped immigrants and impoverished New Yorkers build a better life. The voices of New Yorkers should not have been ignored in the first place, as I said in a letter to the She Built NYC commission and the Mayor in August. Thank you to Governor Cuomo for ensuring that a statue to honor Mother Cabrini will get built, and that Mother Cabrini will get some of the recognition she deserves as one of the amazing women who built our city."

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