

ASSEMBLY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION No. 157

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 12, 2023

The Assembly Community Development and Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Joint Resolution No. 157.

This joint resolution designates the month of April of each year as “Arab American Heritage Month” in New Jersey.

The United States is home to more than 3.5 million Arab Americans, 116,000 of whom reside in New Jersey, which has the seventh largest Arab American population in the country. Arab Americans, who collectively trace their origins to nearly two dozen Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa, represent a rich diversity of cultures, dialects, religions, and traditions. There has been an increase in recent incidents of hate speech against Arab Americans in New Jersey, particularly in schools, and education is critical to combating bigotry.

Recognizing that Arab Americans have long contributed to the civic, cultural, economic, and social fabric of this State, Governor Jon S. Corzine issued Executive Order No. 123 in 2008 to establish the New Jersey Arab American Heritage Commission. The commission is tasked with a variety of responsibilities, which include the dissemination of information on Arab American heritage, culture, and history through a month-long observance in April of each year.

Other states that have recognized April as Arab American Heritage Month include Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia.