



Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
International Intergroup Relations
Councilmember Carlina Rivera, Chair
Re: Landing Day

September 10, 2024

Dear Councilmember Rivera and Committee Members,

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support of Council Member Brewer's resolution to establish Landing Day in New York City. As Co-Interim Executive Directors of Kaufman Music Center—a secular institution with a deep connection to Jewish history and culture—we wholeheartedly support the Council Member's recognition of the contributions of the Jewish community and thank you for considering this resolution.

Kaufman Music Center was established in 1952 as the Hebrew Arts School—a community arts school serving around 400 students founded by Tzipora Jochsberger, who herself escaped the Holocaust thanks to her musical studies. Through the School, Jochsberger hoped to connect American Jews with their heritage using the study of music, and the School soon became a refuge for Jewish New Yorkers, many of whom had also fled atrocities in Europe.

Though Kaufman Music Center has since grown from its beginnings to serve broad audiences of individuals (including individuals who have been largely left out of the New York City cultural community) we remain uniquely linked to our founding principles and maintain a special devotion celebrating Jewish cultural heritage: our NASHIR! The Rottenberg Chorale remains dedicated to the study and performance of Jewish music; our Birnbaum Music Library still holds a collection of Israeli works; and Sunday remains our primary day of weekend study, making us one of few options for Sabbath-observant families in New York City.

This rich history is a vital part of our identity; so too are the deeply meaningful cultural contributions of Jewish people vital to our City's vibrant cultural landscape. We believe Landing Day will provide a platform to educate and inspire those in our community about the enduring legacy of Jewish immigrants and their contributions to New York City.

We thank you Council Member Brewer for recognizing and addressing this need and look forward to seeing the effort come to fruition.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Emily Grant, consisting of several fluid, overlapping loops.

Emily Grant
Co-Interim Executive Director

A blue ink signature of Igal Kesselman, featuring a prominent, stylized initial 'I' followed by a long, horizontal line.

Igal Kesselman
Co-Interim Executive Director

Thank you for your consideration of official marking of Landing Day of the first 23 Jews to arrive on these shores in September 1654. Those Jews, along with those who arrived in New Amsterdam/New York in Colonial Days, were the forerunners of a large and thriving Jewish community in New York. Many of the Jews in those days fought in the American Revolution and participated actively in the founding and development of our nation. It is very fitting that Resolution 438-2024 has been proposed; its adoption will be a sign of recognition to the early Jewish pioneers of this city and to the entire Jewish community's presence here for the past 370 years. I write in support of this Resolution and know that its adoption will be deeply significant.

Rabbi Marc Angel

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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 in favor in opposition

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Name: Cheryl Fishbein
Address: _____ NYC

I represent: JCRC-NY

Address: 520 8th Ave

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Name: HOWARD TEICH

Address: 185 E 85th ST

I represent: Manhattan Jewish Historical Fair

Address: www.manhattanjewish.org

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Name: JULIE HARSH

Address: 36 Baffone

I represent: Museum of Jewish Heritage

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in favor in opposition

Date: September 9, 2024

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Name: Arieh Lebowitz

Address: _____ NJ

I represent: The Jewish Labor Committee 07052

Address: 140 West 31st Street 2nd Floor NY

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