

October 03, 2023

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

October 2023 as Faith Leader Appreciation Month

National Clergy Appreciation Month was established in 1992 and is observed in October to celebrate and pay homage to the clergy of faith-based organizations (FBOs) worldwide who have given their time, support, and resources to selflessly serve. Faith leaders and their congregants have historically served as the cornerstones of their communities, availing themselves to meet the varying needs of many and serving the greater good of humanity, especially during times of crisis. The County of Los Angeles (County) has looked to partner with the faith community to lend a helping hand in solving some of the biggest problems presented within our County. By proclaiming Faith Leader Appreciation Month in October, the County joins a global celebration of respected and influential members found within our communities.

There are numerous County efforts across departments that strive towards a stronger, true partnership between the County and the faith community. These dedicated efforts have leveraged the unique experiences, insights, and guidance from Faith Leaders to provide the biggest impact on the lives of those we serve. As the largest child protection services agency in the nation, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) continues to strengthen collaborative partnerships with faith leaders and FBOs from different religious backgrounds to partner in meeting the complex and diverse needs of youth, adults, and families residing in LA County.

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Faith leaders often have access to networks of members who can provide concrete and non-tangible supports for families such as food, diapers, formula, clothing, mentoring, advocacy, expenses to cover utilities and rent, and even spaces for family bonding activities pivotal to safely reunifying families.

FBOs are often the entity working closest with vulnerable families and communities; thus, well positioned to refer youth, caregivers, or families to an array of community support services that can help to stabilize the family system before more invasive interventions are necessary. The proclamation also acknowledges and celebrates FBOs for their collaborative work with other community-based organizations, philanthropy, and external stakeholders. Together we bring impact. Together we provide solutions, and Faith Leaders have answered the call.

As the County continues its mission to build stronger relationships with local faith leaders and FBOs, proclaiming October as Faith Leader Appreciation Month would provide County departments the opportunity to celebrate, honor, and affirm faith leaders for their commitment and dedication to the children, families, and communities they tirelessly serve. It is our hope that during Faith Leader Appreciation Month, faith leaders and FBOs are appreciated countywide for their outstanding service and acknowledged for their role as vital County partners.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Declare the month of October as Faith Leader Appreciation Month in Los Angeles County:
- 2) Encourage all County Departments to establish ways to recognize partnerships with

Faith Leaders and celebrate their contributions to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable youth, adults, and families in need of support.

- 3) Encourage relevant County Departments to strengthen existing faith-based networks or efforts, as well as streamline and enhance communication with the faith community for better engagement.

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