

THE ELMIRA DECLARATION OF RESILIENCE

* * A PROCLAMATION OF CIVIC RENEWAL * *

JUNE 27, 2026

We, therefore, The Citizens of Elmira, New York, assembled this Twenty-Seventh Day of June, in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six, and in the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Year of American Independence, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions, and relying upon the sovereign authority reserved to the People under the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of New York, and the Charter of our City, do solemnly publish and declare:

That after many years of patience, repeated efforts, respectful petitions, public testimony, elections, commissions, studies, hopes of reform, and faithful participation in the civic affairs of our community, we have witnessed the continued decline of our beloved city.

That our People have endured decades of managed decline; economic stagnation; population loss; burdensome taxation; diminishing opportunity; deteriorating neighborhoods; unmitigated crime; uncertainty in executive leadership; diffusion of authority; diminished accountability; and a system of municipal government that too often obscures responsibility while frustrating decisive executive action compounding the negative reputational stigma over the City of Elmira.

That experience has demonstrated the necessity of restoring to The People a government that is energetic in execution, accountable in leadership, prudent in stewardship, transparent in its deliberations, and answerable to the citizens from whom all lawful authority proceeds.

That we seek these ends not in anger, nor through division, nor through partisan conquest, but through constitutional means, peaceful persuasion, civic participation, and lawful amendment of our municipal charter.

Therefore, we do declare our fixed purpose to pursue, by every lawful and constitutional means available to The People:

- * To amend the Charter of the City of Elmira to restore clear executive accountability and responsible government.
- * To replace the present municipal administration through the free election of new public servants dedicated to these principles.
- * To establish a government worthy of the confidence of its citizens through transparency, integrity, economy, efficiency, and constitutional fidelity.
- * To submit to the People, for their free consideration and approbation, such amendments as may be necessary to restore the energy, accountability, and responsibility essential to republican government.
- * To invite the citizens of our community to consider whether our city's future should be marked by a new civic identity under the name “The City of Resilience, New York”, as a symbol of renewal, perseverance, and hope.

And because no charter amendment, election, ordinance, or law can preserve a free people unless sustained by the character of the citizens themselves, **we further declare that the true strength of our city shall rest not merely in institutions, but in the virtues of its people.

Accordingly, we pledge ourselves to uphold the principles of R.E.S.I.L.I.E.N.C.E.:

R — Responsibility & Respect

Take responsibility for your actions, your choices, and your future. Respect your neighbor even in disagreement.

E — Equality Before the Law

Demand equal justice, equal liberty, and impartial government for every citizen.

S — Service

Serve your family, your neighbors, and your community before serving yourself.

I — Integrity

Speak the truth. Keep your word. Honor your commitments.

L — Liberty

Defend the God-given liberties that belong equally to every American.

I — Industry

Build prosperity through honest labor, innovation, perseverance, and personal responsibility.

E — Excellence

Pursue excellence in work, moral character, education, and public service.

N — Neighborliness

Strengthen our community through kindness, cooperation, civility, and mutual respect.

C — Courage

Stand for what is right even when it is unpopular, difficult, or costly.

E — Endurance

Persevere through adversity with hope, faith, resilience, and unwavering determination.

And for the support of this Declaration, with humble reliance upon the blessing of the God of our Founding Fathers, and with confidence in the wisdom and courage of a free people, we pledge ourselves to these principles, to one another, and to the generations yet to come; that by our conduct, our labor, and our perseverance, Elmira shall again become a city worthy of the hopes of its people.

So declared this Twenty-Seventh Day of June, Two Thousand Twenty-Six.

Signed: