

## 2023-J2225

Senate Resolution No. 2225

BY: Senator LIU

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Flushing, New York, on August 4, 2024

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social, and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, It is the tradition of this State and this Nation to pay tribute to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the ethical and spiritual values of their communities; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body takes pleasure in commemorating the 50th Anniversary of BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Flushing, New York, on Sunday, August 4, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) is a worldwide Hindu denomination dedicated to fostering faith, inspiring service, and promoting better living; and

WHEREAS, His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj (1921-2016), established the first BAPS Hindu mandir in the United States of America on August 4, 1974, in New York City; and

WHEREAS, A Mandir is a sacred Hindu place of worship; it represents

the earthly home of God, where one can visit to quiet the mind and experience spirituality; visitors and devotees come to mandir to offer prayers before the murtis, or sacred images, as well as to attend cultural classes and religious services known as sabhas; and

WHEREAS, BAPS Swaminarayan mandirs serve to both foster and further personal and collective worship; Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the former spiritual leader and guru of BAPS, supported the establishment of mandirs as a means to cultivate peace within communities and connect individuals to Bhagwan; mandirs ensure that Hinduism's teachings are shared with future generations for many years to come; and

WHEREAS, Over the last 50 years, BAPS has grown to over 100 mandirs across the United States; these mandirs offer a welcoming and spiritual space for thousands of families, as well as worship, fellowship, communal meals, education, and activities for young and old, creating a true home for the faithful; and

WHEREAS, BAPS mandirs offer youth activities that encourage and mold young people to live lives of integrity and character that reflect our highest ideals; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, this vital place of worship brings His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj's words- "In the joy of others lies our own"- to life through support for those in need, through a variety of community efforts such as health fairs, food drives, or disaster relief work; and

WHEREAS, Following in the example of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, the volunteers of BAPS have, time and again, answered the call to serve, humbly, selflessly, and inspirationally; and

WHEREAS, BAPS mandirs have a storied history of helping immigrants to the United States retain their connection to their faith while fully embracing and joining in American civic life, truly adding to the rich tapestry of diversity that makes America and Flushing, Queens, New York a beautiful place to call home; and

WHEREAS, Today, the BAPS mandir in Flushing, Queens, New York is a strong example of how houses of worship contribute to the well-being of their congregants and local communities; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of enduring religious institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Flushing, New York, fully confident that this commemoration reflects the belief in those values which enhance the dignity and purpose of life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Flushing, New York.