

2013-J3785

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim August 2014 as Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to set aside official months which foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim August 2014 as Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York is made greater by the diverse heritage of its people; subsequently, it is honored to recognize and acknowledge the significant contributions made by New Yorkers of Hindu heritage; and

WHEREAS, The rich historic contributions of Hindu culture are renowned and include the establishment of the first university in 800 BCE in India; multiple areas of mathematics including algebra and geometry; holistic (Ayurvedic) medicine dating as far back as 1000 BCE in Hindu texts; Sushruta, "the Father of Surgery," an ancient Indian surgeon who authored the book SUSHRATA SAMHITA in which he described over 300 surgical procedures; Sanskrit, the most ancient systematic language in the world; and the practice of yoga and meditation; and

WHEREAS, Hinduism was introduced widely to Americans by Swami Vivekananda at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893; he established the Vedanta Center of New York in 1894, and spent considerable time at the Ridgely Estate; his Vedanta philosophy influenced many notable Americans; and

WHEREAS, New York and the United States have been influenced by the

extraordinary cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of its residents; of the over one billion Hindus worldwide, more than 2 million Hindus live in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans in New York State represent diverse ethnic backgrounds including individuals from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Fiji, the Caribbean, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, and Europe; and

WHEREAS, The Maha Vallabha Ganapathi Devasthanam temple, owned by the Hindu Temple Society of North America, was the earliest traditional Hindu temple in New York, consecrated on July 4, 1977, in Flushing, New York; and

WHEREAS, To date, there are now more than 260 Hindu temples in New York State, more than one quarter of which are located in the greater New York City area; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans share the entrepreneurial spirit of America and have been pioneers and leaders in the technology sector creating businesses that have contributed billions of dollars in market value to the economy; forty percent of all Silicon Valley start-ups were created by Hindu Americans, employing 20,000 to 30,000 persons; and

WHEREAS, While American Hindus represent the world's eighth largest population of Hindus, they account for only .5% of the United States population but represent more than five percent of scientists, engineers, and software specialists; nearly one-half of Hindu Americans hold a postgraduate degree and account for 38,000 physicians and 12,000 medical students and residents; and

WHEREAS, Within the hospitality sector, Hindu Americans contribute significantly to the American economy by employing 850,000 persons, as well as owning a substantial amount of real estate; and

WHEREAS, As part of the diverse cultural makeup of Queens County, Hindu Americans share their numerous holidays and festivals such as Diwali which celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over dark-

ness, and knowledge over ignorance; and

WHEREAS, Hindu temples, organizations, and individuals actively engage in seva or selfless service toward their fellow human beings through charity, public service, and the provision of free medical and legal services; and

WHEREAS, Ahimsa, which is the Sanskrit word for non-injury or non-violence, is a central principle for Hindu Americans and it provides the ethical foundation for vegetarianism, environmentalism, and harmonious living; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans have helped promote the shared American ideals of tolerance, pluralism, and religious freedom, which are inherent to their beliefs, and respect for the diversity of all faiths; and

WHEREAS, It is most fitting to set aside a month to highlight and honor the history and heritage of Hindu Americans, and to remember and pay tribute to the contributions they have made to our State and Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim August 2014 as Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.