

BY: Senator COMRIE

RECOGNIZING the celebration of the Festival of
Diwali

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those who foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of this great State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to recognize the celebration of the Festival of Diwali; and

WHEREAS, The Festival of Diwali (Festival of Lights) is a major holiday that has religious and historical significance for Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains; and

WHEREAS, The word Diwal is a shortened version of the Sanskrit term Deepavali, which translated means "a row of lamps"; Diwali is a Festival of Lights, during which time celebrants light small oil lamps, then place them around their homes, and pray for health, knowledge and peace; and

WHEREAS, Celebrants of Diwali believe that the "rows of lamps" symbolize the light within the individual that rids the soul of the darkness of ignorance; and

WHEREAS, Diwali, which falls on the last day of the month in the lunar calendar, October 19, 2017, is celebrated as a day of thanksgiving and the beginning of the new year for many Hindus; it is a celebration of the victory of good over evil; and

WHEREAS, For the Sikhs, Diwali is feted as the day that the sixth founding Sikh Guru, or revered teacher, Guru Hargobind Ji, was released from captivity from the ruling Mughal Emperor; and

WHEREAS, For Jains, Diwali marks the anniversary of the attainment of moksha or liberation by Mahavira, the last of the Tirthankaras, who were the great teachers of Jain dharma, at the end of his life in 527 B.C.; and

WHEREAS, Currently, there are over 300,000 people who make up the South Asian community in New York City; their contributions to the communities they reside in are plentiful and have enriched the culture of the great City of New York; and

WHEREAS, It is the practice of this Legislative Body to recognize those organizations and its members of true purpose and worthy accomplishment who provide opportunities to celebrate their rich ethnic flavor and who strive to preserve their cultural heritage; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations recognize the celebration of the Festival of Diwali.