

BY: Senator LIU

COMMENDING the Association of Indians in America, New York Chapter, upon the occasion of hosting its 35th Annual Deepavali Festival on October 2, 2022

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations 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 commend the Association of Indians in America, New York Chapter, upon the occasion of hosting its 35th Annual Deepavali Festival on Sunday, October 2, 2022, at the South Street Seaport in New York City; and

WHEREAS, The oldest national association of Asian Indians in America, the Association of Indians in America (AIA) was founded on August 20, 1967, after the United States Congress passed the 1965-1966 Immigration Act, repealing the Asian Exclusion Act of 1917; and

WHEREAS, In 1970, the constitution of AIA was adopted, and one year later, it was officially incorporated; and

WHEREAS, Through its mantra of "one member one vote," AIA represents the hopes and aspirations of those Asian immigrants who are united by their common bond of Indian Heritage and the dream of building a new life in the United States; and

WHEREAS, This is done by promoting India's rich culture and traditions through various events; and encouraging and facilitating the participation of its members and others in the development and progress of India through charitable, cultural and educational activities; and to foster communication and co-operation among the people of Indian Heritage worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Comprised of members from all over the tri-state area, the AIA New York Chapter represents all regions and religions of India, as well as of varied professions, backgrounds and occupations; and

WHEREAS, Dedicated to its members and the people of India, AIA has joined forces to help raise funds for the victims of the 1993 earthquake in Maharashtra, Western India; and

WHEREAS, In that same year, AIA established the Sushruta and Charaka Awards to recognize and honor people of Indian origin in the field of medicine and health care; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, the AIA hosted its first Deepavali Festival in New York City; commonly known as the Festival of Lights, it is a major

holiday which has both religious and historical significance for Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains; and

WHEREAS, The word Deepavali is a shortened version of the Sanskrit term Deepavali and symbolizes the spiritual victory of light over darkness, of good over evil, and of knowledge over ignorance; and

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

WHEREAS, The Festival of Deepavali also celebrates the coming of monsoon season and the end of the summer harvest; each faith that celebrates this holiday connects it with different stories and religious significances; and

WHEREAS, The festival is celebrated over five days, with the third day being the most significant, as it coincides with the darkest night of the lunar month; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, New York City officially recognized Deepavali as a holiday, and during this time, alternate street parking is suspended so revelers can celebrate safely; through the assistance of AIA, the White House celebrated its first Deepavali in 2006; and

WHEREAS, The success of AIA is in direct correlation to the efforts of its President, Harish Thakkar, and its members, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the institution and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, It is the practice of this Legislative Body to recognize those who celebrate their rich ethnic flavor and who strive to preserve their cultural heritage; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Association of Indians in America, New York Chapter, upon the occasion of hosting its 35th Annual Deepavali Festival on October 2, 2022; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Harish Thakkar, President, the Association of Indians in America, New York Chapter.