

BY: M. of A. Rajkumar

COMMEMORATING Indian Independence Day to be
celebrated August 15, 2023

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay just tribute to the cultural heritage of the ethnic groups which comprise and contribute to the richness and diversity of the community of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in keeping with its time-honored traditions, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to commemorate Indian Independence Day to be celebrated August 15, 2023; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of India is a trusted ally of this great State and Nation, sharing our values of democracy, pluralism, freedom, innovation, and entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, August 15 is a national holiday in India, commemorating the day in 1947 when the United Kingdom ceded sovereignty to the Indian Constituent Assembly, ending centuries of British rule; and

WHEREAS, The transfer of sovereignty was the culmination of a decades-long Indian Independence movement, a predominantly non-violent movement of protest and civil disobedience, with Mahatma Gandhi as one of its most famed leaders; and

WHEREAS, The Indian Independence movement had a profound impact around the world, impressing its principles on numerous other decolonization efforts and political movements, including the American civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, New York City has a deep history of celebrating Indian Independence, hosting the annual India Day Parade, the largest Indian Independence Day parade in the world, which regularly attracts hundreds of thousands of attendees; and

WHEREAS, Traditions to celebrate Indian Independence Day continue to grow in New York City, with an annual unfurling of the tricolor flag in Times Square beginning in 2020, as well as multiple iconic buildings being lit in the colors of the flag; and

WHEREAS, India has deep economic ties with this great State, with numerous businesses from each having offices in the other, and Empire State Development having a Global New York Foreign Office in India; and

WHEREAS, The United States is home to the largest Indian diaspora population in the world, composed of ethnically, culturally, linguistically, and spiritually diverse people; and

WHEREAS, Indian Americans have made immeasurable contributions to

the arts, the STEM fields, business, philanthropy, academics, defense, sports, religion, and all levels of government; and

WHEREAS, New York City's Indian American community is one of the largest in the Western Hemisphere, with an overwhelming majority living in Queens, where Indian Americans have thrived, possessing higher overall incomes and educational attainment; and

WHEREAS, A critical milestone in the history of Indian Americans occurred in our great State, when New York City resident Bhicaji Balsara successfully litigated to become the first known naturalized citizen from India; and

WHEREAS, Queens boasts its own milestone in Indian American relations, being the destination of the first commercial flight from India to the United States, when Air India operated a flight from Mumbai to what is now John F. Kennedy International Airport in 1960; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to recognize such events of significance which foster ethnic pride and exemplify the cultural diversity that represents and strengthens the fabric of the people and the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate Indian Independence Day to be celebrated August 15, 2023; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Consul General of India, and various Indian organizations in the State of New York.