

Assembly Resolution No. 11

**BY:** M. of A. Rajkumar

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim January as Tamil Heritage Month in the State of New York in conjunction with the observance of Pongal to be celebrated January 14, 2025

**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 memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim January as Tamil Heritage Month in the State of New York in conjunction with the observance of Pongal to be celebrated January 14, 2025; and

**WHEREAS,** The Tamil people, who trace their ancestry to the southern portion of the Indian subcontinent, are a vibrant community of over 80 million who make outstanding contributions around the world; and

**WHEREAS,** The United States is home to a proud Tamil American community, which has increased approximately five hundred percent in this century; and

**WHEREAS,** A major driver of the increase of the community is Tamils utilizing the H1-B visa program for students and professionals, bringing their talent and intellectual capital to our Great Nation; and

**WHEREAS,** The Tamil American community preserves and celebrates its heritage through a network of local sangams, beginning with the founding of New York Tamil Sangam in 1970; and

**WHEREAS,** Tamil Americans have reached the greatest of heights in our Nation, having served as Executives of Fortune 500 companies, preeminent scholars, tech entrepreneurs, virtuosos of the arts, leaders in science and medicine, and even Vice President of the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** New York is home to a thriving Tamil American community, who have made their mark in a diverse array of fields; and

**WHEREAS,** One of the most joyous holidays for the Tamil community is Pongal, a traditional harvest festival dedicated to the solar deity Surya; and

**WHEREAS,** Pongal is a time to show gratitude to everything that made possible the harvest - the farm workers, the good weather, the earth, and the livestock; and

**WHEREAS,** The most iconic tradition for the festival is preparing the Pongal dish, made by boiling rice, milk, and sugar, which celebrates the

fruit of people's labor and symbolizes the "boiling over" of abundance of the harvest; and

**WHEREAS,** Among other Pongal traditions are kolam artwork, replacing old possessions, blessing cattle, family gatherings, and siblings affirming their love for each other; 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 memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim January as Tamil Heritage Month in the State of New York in conjunction with the observance of Pongal to be celebrated January 14, 2025; and be it further

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