

Assembly Resolution No. 1176

BY: M. of A. Rajkumar

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim January 2026, as Tamil Heritage Month in the State of New York

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 2026, as Tamil Heritage Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of Pongal to be celebrated January 14, 2026; 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 2026, as Tamil Heritage Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and the Consul General of India, New York.