



Indian Diaspora Council
 Shared heritage, aspirations and interests
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Press Statement

THE INDIAN DIASPORA COUNCIL (IDC) ENDORSES DIWALI BILL HR11 BEING INTRODUCED BY US CONGRESS MEMBER GRACE MENG

The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) joins with its global affiliates in endorsing the “Diwali Bill HR 11 being introduced by US Congress Member Grace Meng.

IDC President Ashook Ramsaran states that, “IDC fully supports Diwali as a school holiday and welcomes the introduction of HR11 in the US House of Representatives by US Congress Member Grace Meng” (representing Congressional District #6 New York) which comprises a significant population of people of South Asian origin.

118TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION H. R. II

To amend title 5, United States Code, to establish Diwali, also known as “Deepavali”, as a Federal holiday, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. MENG introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee: To amend title 5, United States Code, to establish Diwali, also known as “Deepavali”, as a Federal holiday, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Diwali Day Act”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING DIWALI DAY.

Congress finds the following: Diwali, also known as Deepavali, is an auspicious day celebrated by many South and Southeast Asian communities as well as religious groups including the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain communities. Millions of Americans, both religious and secular, celebrate Diwali, which is also called the ‘Festival of Lights’.

Diwali falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth month or the New Moon Day in the month of Kaṛtika of the Vedic lunar calendar, which occurs during October or November. The celebration of Diwali coincides with the observation of the holidays recognized by many for Bandi Chhor Divas (the Day of Liberation), Kali Puja, and Tihar. Diwali signifies the victory of good over evil and unfairness, and knowledge over ignorance. It is an annual time for celebration, reflection, prayer, and gatherings with family, friends, and community.

SEC. 3. DIWALI DAY.

Section 6103(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to Columbus Day the following: “Diwali Day.”

“**Diwali**, also known as Deepavali or the Festival of Lights, is one of the most important festivals in Indian religions. It symbolises the spiritual "victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance". The festival is widely associated with conflagrations between good and evil entities. Featured in religions: Hinduism, Newar Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism. Observances: Diya and lighting, home decoration, shopping, fireworks, puja (prayers), gifts, feast, and sweets, families gather together” *Wikipedia*

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Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.