

Indian Diaspora Council (IDC) Statement
In support of Congresswoman Grace Meng's Legislation:
Diwali Day Act would make Diwali a federal holiday
Presented by Ashook Ramsaran president of IDC

Good afternoon, Everyone.

Congress Member Meng, we thank you for sponsoring this Bill and holding this important hearing, listening to all supporting voices, while acknowledging the support of other Members of Congress.

With names such as Jenifer, Joe, Shekhar, Linda, Dilip, and Maize, how can we fail !
besides we US Congr Member Meng has added Grace to this !!

The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) unequivocally endorses and supports Grace Meng's Legislation: The Diwali Day Act that would make Diwali a federal holiday. IDC represents the interests of persons of Indian origin in USA and 22 other countries.

This Diwali Bill is fully supported by recently passed NYS legislation to designate Diwali as a Federal Holiday. In addition to New York City Resolution 0146-2018 and New York State bills S20995A and A02339 To allow the designation of Diwali as a school holiday in New York city and "calling upon New York City Department of Education to establish Diwali as an official holiday for New York City public school students".

Following its long tradition of embracing diversity and responding positively to the aspirations of its changing population and demographics, the United States has an unmatched history of responding favorably to be inclusive by bringing more opportunities, recognition, awareness, understanding and education to make this city the welcome home of millions -- the most diverse place in the world, to live, to succeed, to contribute, to collaborate, and to make it better today and tomorrow.

Diwali, a rich and enduring celebration known by many as the Festival of Lights, is celebrated throughout the world by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, as well as many other religions, groups, associations and individuals, transcending borders and religions. It has become a global celebration of light.

The Diwali Day Act that would make Diwali a federal holiday would be another historic opportunity for to officially recognize and designate Diwali and join in celebrating a universal declaration of "light over darkness, good over evil, and to dispel ignorance and darkness".

Diwali is publicly recognized and routinely celebrated in several official US federal, state and city venues with high profile and prominent ceremonies and performances: by the President at the White House, at the US Capitol, by Governors including New York State, and at city levels such as New York City – including in this very chamber and at Gracie Mansion. In addition, the occasion of Diwali has been recognized with many prominent Proclamations, Resolutions and Citations from federal, state and city officials from New York (from many of you in New York City Council) to Washington to California, recognizing Diwali as a universal celebration of "light over darkness and good over evil".

While the population of people with origins in South Asia exceeding 4.5 million in the USA, the prominence of Diwali celebration among many more people is certainly becoming more visible and widely accepted. By establishing Diwali as a Federal Holiday, the USA would become more enlightened by embracing this universally accepted celebration.

The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) urges Congressional approval of the Diwali Day Act, a fitting and timely tribute and at this critical time of US history.

For more information, please contact Ashook Ramsaran @ ashookramsaran@gmail.com

*The **Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC)**, established in 1997 and headquartered in New York, USA, is an international non-profit, non-political and secular organization with global affiliates, chapters 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.*

[~117115904]

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118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION**H. R.** _____

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
on _____

A BILL

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 Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the "Diwali Day Act".

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING DIWALI DAY.

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) Diwali, also known as Deepavali, is an aus-
8 picious day celebrated by many South and Southeast

1 Asian communities as well as religious groups in-
2 cluding the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain com-
3 munities. Millions of Americans, both religious and
4 secular, celebrate Diwali, which is also called the
5 "Festival of Lights".

6 (2) Diwali falls on the fifteenth day of the
7 eighth month or the New Moon Day in the month
8 of Kārtika of the Vedic lunar calendar, which occurs
9 during October or November.

10 (3) The celebration of Diwali coincides with the
11 observation of the holidays recognized by many for
12 Bandi Chhor Divas (the Day of Liberation), Kali
13 Puja, and Tihar.

14 (4) Diwali signifies the victory of good over evil
15 and unfairness, and knowledge over ignorance. It is
16 an annual time for celebration, reflection, prayer,
17 and gatherings with family, friends, and community.

SEC. 3. DIWALI DAY.

19 Section 6103(a) of title 5, United States Code, is
20 amended by inserting after the item relating to Columbus
21 Day the following:
22 "Diwali Day."

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March 27, 2023 (1:04 p.m.)

(864826|9)

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March 27, 2023 (1:04 p.m.)

(864826|9)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Goldes, Jordan** <Jordan.Goldes@mail.house.gov>

Date: Wed, May 24, 2023, 7:27 PM

Subject: RE: Cong. Meng Invite

To: Ashook Ramsaran <ashookramsaran@gmail.com>

Thank you for joining Congresswoman Meng this Friday. Please see the Zoom link and other details below.

Congresswoman Meng's legislation, Diwali Day Act, would make Diwali a federal holiday, and if enacted, would be the 12th federally recognized holiday in the United States. A copy of the bill can be viewed [here](#) and more details [here](#).

Also attending will be other state and local elected officials from New York including the sponsors of the state bill that seeks to allow the designation of Diwali as a school holiday in New York City. We are still awaiting confirmations. Others from advocacy organizations that celebrate Diwali will be in attendance as well. We ask that remarks be 1-2 minutes.

The Zoom will not have a waiting room; you will be live to the viewing public when you log on.

We will also be sending a release when the event ends; if you would like to provide a quote and haven't provided one already, please send by noon on Friday.

Thank you again for participating.

Join ZoomGov Meeting

<https://ushr.zoomgov.com/j/1618563388?pwd=ckpDNUVDVGZTYVHb29OVFkzeGt4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 161 856 3388

Passcode: 883796

NY State Assembly to pass legislation to observe Diwali as federal holiday

India New England News May 25, 2023

New York— The New York State Assembly hopes to pass a legislation to observe Diwali and Lunar New Year as federal holidays.

In a statement released on Wednesday, Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie said that it is important to recognise New York's rich and diverse culture.

"Therefore, it is the intention of the Assembly to pass a legislation to observe Lunar New Year and Diwali as holidays in New York State before the close of our legislative session. We will continue discussions with the stakeholders as to how this might affect the school calendar," the statement read.

The move comes after endeavours by legislators and members of the diaspora to establish these festivals as recognised holidays in the state.

Congresswoman Grace Meng, representing NY's 6th Congressional District, will announce the Diwali Day Act, which would designate Diwali as the 12th officially-recognised holiday in the US.

"Our holidays should recognise and reflect the great diversity of our communities and I look forward to these bills moving through the Assembly," Meng tweeted.

For the announcement, Meng will be joined by Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, State Senator Joe Addabbo, and Councilman Shekar Krishnan. (IANS)
