

Aarya Acharya SB667.pdf

Uploaded by: Acharya, Aarya

Position: FAV

Aarya Acharya
March 11, 2021
SB667: Favorable

Good afternoon members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, I am writing as a student from Baltimore County in favor of SB667. My name is Aarya Acharya and I am representing the Baltimore Association of Nepalese in America. I am a 9th grader who, as a Nepali American, celebrates the holiday "Dashain" around the fall time. Dashain is a holiday that many Nepali Americans in my community celebrate, but we are often faced with challenges every year while trying to.

Dashain is a very special holiday for me and many other students who live in Maryland. We often meet with many different people throughout the day and have specific activities to do. With all the fun that comes with the holiday, school has been scheduled for 7 of the 8 years that I celebrated during the school year. While doing the important activities on Dashain, I often feel a burden thinking about all of the work that I am missing. This burden becomes much more prominent as you start to get older and reach higher grade levels. Seeing the school systems not recognize my community and the holidays I celebrate make me feel like my community is neglected. Not respecting our traditions has not only affected Dashain, but is also leaving a negative precedent. It shows a poor reflection on our county and school system's ability to reach our needs.

If this bill is passed, students will not have school on Dashain. Not only would this remove that burden, it would also show my community that our school systems actually care. I see many other groups get proper representation, but Nepali residents still don't have the attention we need, even though our community is rapidly growing. Maryland has the fifth biggest Nepali population in the U.S, and Baltimore especially has a growing number of Nepali Americans.

If we continue to ignore the Nepali population and our needs, young children who celebrate Dashain will never see their culture as something that is recognized. Recognizing this holiday would be the first step in stopping this, and would help students enjoy Dashain the way it was originally intended to be celebrated. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support SB667.

Dashain Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Prajapati, Saroj

Position: FAV

Dashain Testimony – Saroj D. Prajapati, President of Nepal Education and Cultural Center (NECC), Beallsville, MD

As a Nepali origin living in the United States of America, it is very important for me to keep my culture and tradition alive. Just like any other festival of Nepal, Dashain plays even more important role in my life. Dashain is the important and greatest Hindu festival for Nepalese people around the world. Nepalese people around the world save their vacation days so they can return home when the Dashain festival is happening and attend it. It is a time when the entire country of Nepal is united in its values and identity. The generations of people of Nepal mainly celebrate this festival to keep their cultural heritage to pass onto their next generations. It is the festival that brings happiness and delivers the message of unity among people.

Dashain starts according to the on the Hindu calendar of Ashvin, the seventh month, which coincides with the shukla paksha (lunar fortnight). The festival ends on Purnima (full moon), usually between September and October. According to Hindu theology, Mahishasura, a demon invades and wreaks havoc on the devaloka, the heaven where gods and devas live. Goddess Durga became the main character of this auspicious occasion. There are many manifestations of Durga, and the days of the festival celebrate each aspect of her.

The festival carries the celebrations that last 15 days in total. However, some of these days carry a more special significance than others. First day of Dashain is the beginning of the festival is marked with a blessing. A Hindu priest or the head of the household takes a large metal pot called a kalasha and pours holy water inside it, then covers it with dung so that Jamara seeds can be planted. These seeds are fast-growing and are expected to sprout within ten days. The pot is then placed in a special prayer room to grow,. This process continues for 6 days. On Seventh day, the largest celebration takes place. The Kalasha is carried along with an assortment of flora such as banana sticks, wood apple leaves, wheatgrass, and sugarcanes bound with red cloth. This is referred to as a Phulpati (flowers, plants, and leaves), a full parade and spiritual procession. On the eighth and ninth day, the head of the house perform the pujas at the home and also outside temples. The adults and children wear new clothes to go around the temples to worship and meet other friends and relatives. On this day many work tools and vehicles are blessed through sacrificial offerings. Finally, on the tenth day, Durga defeats or kills Mahishasura, a demon culminating: the triumph of good, essentially why Dashain is celebrated. This day is also known as Vijaya Dashami, when the elder relatives and friends offers the blessings to the children and the youngsters by offering the Tika on their forehead and give money as a token of Sagun. This day strengthens the bonds of the community and connects the generations. This is the day also signifies the victory of Lord Ram over Ravan, a demon who kidnapped his wife Sita.

Although it's not possible for the people outside of Nepal to take time off for 15 days from the school and/or the workplace, they at least observed one day off from their busy schedule to celebrate this main festival of their country of origin. There are many other festival from different areas of the world observed and honored in USA, but Nepali people haven't had opportunity to present themselves the importance of Dashain to the mainstream. The growing numbers of Nepali immigrants in the area definitely making its presence in the community, therefore, I strongly think Dashain should be on the State/County calendars.

Vote UNfavorable for SB0667.pdf

Uploaded by: mcavoy, vince

Position: UNF

Vote UNfavorable for SB0667

vince mcavoy po box 41075 baltimore md

I strongly urge an unfavorable on SB667.
America is a Christian nation.

That is not just a slogan.
When I say that America is a Christian nation,
I'm saying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and
this is one nation UNDER that God.

This is not to disparage the individuals who are of a certain ethnicity who are our neighbors.
Indeed, part of becoming American for foreign-born legal residents is coming to see Christianity as
intrinsic to our law, culture and civic life. Commemorating false gods to appease a miniscule portion
of Maryland and America is not befitting a Christian nation.

Make they find peace.