



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Good afternoon Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and my fellow colleagues in the Health & Government Operations Committee. I am here today to present HB676: General Provisions – Commemorative Days – Dashain Day.

For background, Dashain is a holiday that originated in Nepal and is celebrated in many other countries in that vicinity, including India, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. It is the celebration of good triumphing over evil, and it spans two weeks.

As of the 2010 Census, Maryland had the fifth largest Nepalese population in the country, with a population of 3,412. As of 2018, that number was estimated to be around 25,000. As of 2019, 67,000 Maryland residents were born in India. And Maryland continues to be a draw for people from this region, with immigration from Bhutan and Bangladesh also on the rise.

Maryland continues to be a major landing point for people from those parts of the world, with major population centers located in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Prince George’s County, and Montgomery County. And those who come over continue to be hardworking, exemplary examples of what the American dream is supposed to be. They are small business owners, doctors, nurses, volunteers, front line workers, and more.

Part of what makes our country, and our state, great is the fact that there is such a cultural blend. Acknowledging Dashain would further enable this blending to occur. By acknowledging Dashain, a more comforting and understanding environment can be created throughout our state, including in the business world, in government, in school systems, and more, much like has been done for other holidays.

This population will continue to grow, and it is incumbent upon us as leaders of the state to provide a welcoming and understanding environment. We already acknowledge this population with the MVA including Nepali and Hindi languages on official forms. But taking that acknowledgement of population growth a step further and recognizing and commemorating Dashain would be a major step to show support for this community.

I would like to thank you for your time and I respectfully request a favorable report on HB676.