



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE ASIAN AMERICAN
AND PACIFIC ISLANDER CAUCUS
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

March 12, 2021

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To: Maryland General Assembly House Health and Government
Operations Committee
Bill: HB676
Bill Name: General Provisions – Commemorative Days – Dashain Day
Position: Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Health and Government
Operations Committee Members,

The Maryland Legislative Asian-American and Pacific-Islander Caucus is made
up of Senators and Delegates in the General Assembly who seek to represent
the interests of the Asian-American and Pacific-Islander (AAPI) communities in
Maryland. As the fastest-growing racial minority group in the US, it is crucial that
the legislative goals of AAPI individuals and communities are well-represented in
Maryland public policy. Thank you for allowing the Caucus the opportunity to
express our support of HB676.

HB676 requires an annual proclamation of Dashain Day by the Governor on
October 14th to commemorate an important holiday in many South Asian cultures
and traditions, the Dashain festival. This festival marks the triumph of good over
evil, and is celebrated widely and with flourish. The Dashain festival is considered
one of Nepal's most notable holidays, and spans longer than a week, with
different traditions carried out on each day.

There are over [128,500 South Asians](#) who live in Maryland, and over [6,000
Nepali residents](#) who call Maryland their home. While this is the case, many
prevalent South Asian holidays are passed by unnoticed and unacknowledged
by the State. By commemorating the widespread Dashain festival, this bill will
allow many South Asians in Maryland to see that their cultures and traditions are
appreciated and respected by the State of Maryland, and will encourage pride in
traditional beliefs.

Additionally, a public commemoration of this holiday will encourage further
education and understanding of many minority beliefs and cultures, fostering a
more respectful and accepting State as a whole.

The Maryland Legislative AAPI Caucus supports this bill and urges a favorable
report on HB676.