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AND PACIFIC ISLANDER CAUCUS
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TO:

Chairwoman Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Delegate Bonnie Cullison
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Caucus

DATE: March 15, 2023

RE: HB967 General Provisions–Commemorative Days–Dashain Day

**The AAPI Caucus supports HB244 General Provisions – Commemorative Days –
Dashain Day**

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 HB967.

HB967 requires an annual proclamation of Dashain Day by the Governor on October 5th 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.

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 HB967.