



House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
The Honorable Ken Kerr, Vice Chair

March 17, 2026

FAVORABLE – HB 588 – Missing and Murdered American Indian and Alaskan Native Women and Girls – Day of Awareness and Reporting Requirement

Dear Members of the Maryland House of Delegates,

On behalf of the South Asian Commission, we express our strong support for **HB 661**, legislation that would officially recognize **January as Muslim American Heritage Month** and **May as Jewish American Heritage Month** in the State of Maryland.

This bill represents a meaningful step toward celebrating the cultural, religious, and historical contributions that Muslim and Jewish Americans have made to our state and nation. Establishing these heritage months helps promote greater understanding, respect, and appreciation for the diverse communities that enrich Maryland's social fabric.

Maryland's Muslim and Jewish communities reflect a wide range of racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Likewise, the South Asian American community includes individuals of many faith traditions, including Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, and others. Muslim and Jewish Americans are an important and valued part of this broader community, contributing significantly to the civic, professional, cultural, and economic life of our state.

By designating these heritage months, the State of Maryland sends a powerful message that diversity is valued and that the traditions and experiences of all communities deserve recognition. Such acknowledgments help foster inclusion and encourage continued dialogue and learning among Maryland residents.

The South Asian Commission remains committed to supporting efforts that highlight the rich cultural and religious diversity of our state. We will continue to encourage initiatives, programs, and educational opportunities that strengthen understanding and celebrate the many communities that call Maryland home.

For these reasons, the South Asian Commission respectfully urges the Maryland House of Delegates to pass **HB 661**.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming Maryland.

Sincerely,

Gurpreet (Preet) Takhar
Chair, South Asian Commission