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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 269

Offered January 14, 2025

Designating March, in 2025 and in each succeeding year, as Persian Heritage Month in Virginia.

Patrons—Van Valkenburg and Sturtevant

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Iranian Americans have been contributing to cultural and community life in Virginia for more than 50 years, and the Commonwealth is home to the fourth-largest Iranian American population in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Iranian Americans are highly educated, successful, and dignified members of society and have made many contributions to the American economy through a variety of career fields, becoming the eighth-wealthiest minority group in the country; and

WHEREAS, according to a study by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Iranian Americans are among the top 20 immigrant groups with the highest rate of business ownership at 21.5 percent, which has led to significant economic contributions to their communities and a total national net business income of \$2.56 billion per year; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the study indicated that 50 percent of Iranian Americans are in professional and managerial occupations, more than any other ethnic group studied; and

WHEREAS, the most recent United States Census showed that 59 percent of Iranian immigrants hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the 28 percent national average, and more than one in four Iranian Americans holds a master's or doctoral degree, the highest rate among 67 ethnic groups studied; and

WHEREAS, as immigrants and refugees, many Iranian Americans hold stories of hardship and perseverance from having experienced life under a dictatorship and religious persecution in their homeland, and they have used these experiences to enrich and uplift the Commonwealth and the United States by helping to build peace and prosperity for the betterment of all; and

WHEREAS, Persian civilization is one of the oldest civilizations on Earth, having existed for more than 5,000 years, and Iranian Americans have brought to the United States many elements of their rich heritage and culture, including celebration of the Persian New Year or Nowruz, which translates to "new day"; and

WHEREAS, Nowruz, which takes place in March and coincides with the spring equinox, celebrates the rebirth of nature and the triumph of joy over sorrow, as well as promoting peace and reconciliation between generations, families, and neighbors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate March, in 2025 and in each succeeding year, as Persian Heritage Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to representatives of the Iranian American community in Virginia so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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