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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 663

Offered May 13, 2024

Prefiled May 13, 2024

*Commending BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha.*

Patron—Srinivasan

WHEREAS, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha is a worldwide Hindu denomination dedicated to fostering faith, inspiring service, and promoting better living; and

WHEREAS, His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj (1921-2016) established the first BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha "BAPS" Hindu mandir or temple in the United States of America on August 4, 1974, in New York City; and

WHEREAS, 2024 marks 50 years of service and faith in the United States for BAPS, and in that time, BAPS has grown to include more than 100 mandirs across the United States; and

WHEREAS, these BAPS mandirs offer a welcoming and spiritual space for thousands of families, as well as worship, fellowship, communal meals, education, and activities for young and old, creating a true home for the faithful; and

WHEREAS, BAPS mandirs offer youth activities that encourage and mold young people to live lives of integrity and character that reflect the highest ideals; and

WHEREAS, BAPS mandirs bring His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj's words—"In the joy of others lies our own"—to life through support for those in need, including a variety of community efforts like health fairs, food drives, and disaster relief work; and

WHEREAS, following in the example of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, the volunteers of BAPS have, time and again, answered the call to serve, humbly, selflessly, and inspirationally; and

WHEREAS, BAPS mandirs have a storied history of helping immigrants to the United States retain their connection to their faith while fully embracing and participating in American civic life; and

WHEREAS, BAPS mandirs add to the rich tapestry of diversity that makes the Commonwealth, and the entire United States, a beautiful place to call home; and

WHEREAS, the BAPS mandirs in Chantilly, Newport News, Richmond, Salem, and Staunton are proud examples of how houses of worship can contribute to the well-being of their congregants and strengthen local communities; and

WHEREAS, the BAPS mandirs in Chantilly, Newport News, Richmond, Salem, and Staunton will commemorate August 4, 2024, as BAPS Day to honor the denomination's first 50 years of achievements, and the Commonwealth's BAPS mandirs look forward to serving their communities with even greater zeal in the next 50 years and beyond; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha hereby be commended on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the first BAPS mandir in the United States; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to representatives of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for its contributions to religious life in the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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