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H. RES. 747

Recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 16, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. MCDERMOTT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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RESOLUTION

Recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali.

Whereas Diwali, a festival of great significance to Indian Americans and the people of India, is celebrated annually by Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains throughout the United States and the world;

Whereas there are more than 2,000,000 Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains in the United States;

Whereas the word ''Diwali'' is a shortened version of the Sanskrit term ''Deepavali'', which means ''a row of lamps'';

Whereas Diwali is a festival of lights, during which celebrants light small oil lamps, place them around the home, and pray for health, knowledge, and peace;

Whereas celebrants of Diwali believe that the rows of lamps symbolize the light within the individual that rids the soul of the darkness of ignorance;

Whereas Diwali, falling on the last day of the last month in the lunar calendar, is celebrated as a day of thanksgiving and the beginning of the new year for many Hindus;

Whereas for Hindus, Diwali is a celebration of the victory of good over evil;

Whereas for Sikhs, Diwali is feted as the day that the sixth founding Sikh Guru, or revered teacher, Guru Hargobind ji, was released from captivity from the ruling Mughal Emperor; and

Whereas for Jains, Diwali marks the anniversary of the attainment of moksha or liberation by Mahavira, the last of the Tirthankaras, who were the great teachers of Jain dharma, at the end of his life in 527 B.C.: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) during this time of celebration, in order to demonstrate support for Indian Americans and the Indian Diaspora throughout the world, recognizes Diwali as an important festival;

(2) acknowledges the international religious and historical importance of the festival of Diwali;

(3) recognizes and appreciates the religious diversity in both India and the United States and throughout the world;

(4) acknowledges and supports the new relationship of collaboration and dialogue in international efforts between the United States and India; and

(5) in observance of and out of respect for the start of Diwali, the festival of lights, acknowledges the onset of Diwali and expresses its deepest respect to Indian Americans and the Indian Diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion.

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