

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 12

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator PATRICK J. DIEGNAN, JR.

District 18 (Middlesex)

Senator GORDON M. JOHNSON

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Greenstein

SYNOPSIS

Designates January of each year as “Hindu Heritage Month” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/15/2024)

SJR12 DIEGNAN, JOHNSON

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1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating January of each year as “Hindu
2 Heritage Month” in New Jersey.
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4 **WHEREAS**, Hinduism is the world’s oldest religion, dating back to a
5 time between 3000-8000 BCE; and
6 **WHEREAS**, Among many practices, Hindus believe in karma,
7 reincarnation, non-violence, and the spiritual nature of living
8 beings; and
9 **WHEREAS**, Hindus believe in a divine higher power that takes form in
10 many deities, such as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Devi,
11 Krishna, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga and Kali; and
12 **WHEREAS**, There are many holidays celebrated throughout the year in
13 which Hindus honor various deities, but the most well-known in the
14 United States are Diwali and Holi; and
15 **WHEREAS**, Diwali, the Festival of Lights, celebrates Lakshmi, who is
16 the goddess representing wealth and good fortune; and
17 **WHEREAS**, Holi, the Festival of Colors, is a holiday that honors the
18 beginning of spring, in which bonfires are lit and colored paste and
19 water is thrown on those celebrating; and
20 **WHEREAS**, Hindus have made enormous contributions to cultural
21 development throughout history, including significant achievements
22 in math, science, and medicine used in the modern world; and
23 **WHEREAS**, There are over 1.1 billion Hindus in the world; and
24 **WHEREAS**, About three percent of New Jersey’s population is Hindu,
25 making New Jersey the state with the highest percentage in the
26 United States; and
27 **WHEREAS**, The largest Hindu temple in the world, called BAPS Shri
28 Swaminarayan Mandir, is located in Robbinsville, New Jersey; and
29 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey has a large and vibrant Hindu community that
30 deserves recognition for their rich and noteworthy history and
31 cultural contributions to this State; now, therefore,

32
33 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
34 *State of New Jersey:*

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36 1. The month of January of each year is designated as “Hindu
37 Heritage Month” in the State of New Jersey.
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39 2. The Governor is requested to annually issue a proclamation
40 calling on the public officials and citizens of this State to observe
41 “Hindu Heritage Month” with appropriate activities and programs.
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43 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.
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46 **STATEMENT**

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48 This joint resolution designates January of each year as “Hindu
49 Heritage Month” in the State of New Jersey in recognition of the

1 many Hindu residents of this State and their rich and noteworthy
2 history and cultural contributions to this State.

3 Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world, dating back to a
4 time between 3000-8000 BCE. Sacred texts have been passed on
5 through generations for thousands of years, creating a strong
6 following of 1.1 billion Hindus in the 21st century. Hindus believe
7 in a variety of deities, each representing different concepts and
8 values within Hinduism. Different sects of Hindus emphasize
9 particular deities and practices over others, depending on their
10 beliefs. Various Hindu gods and goddesses can be traced to origin
11 points spanning several thousand years, making the traditions
12 surrounding Hinduism and the Hindu deities rich and storied. Some
13 deities have holidays celebrated in their honor, such as Diwali, the
14 Festival of Lights, which celebrates Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth
15 and fortune. Another well-known Hindu holiday is Holi, the
16 Festival of Colors. It is a holiday celebrating the coming of spring,
17 famous for colorful paste and water thrown on those celebrating.

18 Hindus have made enormous contributions to cultural
19 development throughout history across the globe. Significant
20 achievements in math, science, and medicine used in the modern
21 world can be traced to Hindus. New Jersey is lucky enough to be
22 the state with the highest percentage of Hindu residents in the
23 United States. The Hindu community has shown others the beauty
24 of their beliefs, including though the establishment of the largest
25 Hindu temple in the world, now located in Robbinsville, New
26 Jersey.