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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 492

Offered February 23, 2023

Commending the Sikh Center of Virginia.

Patrons—Sewell, Guzman and Mundon King

WHEREAS, established in 2009, the Sikh Center of Virginia in Manassas is a gurdwara that serves as a house of worship for people of the Sikh faith, provides educational programs, and celebrates Sikh traditions and holy days; and

WHEREAS, on April 14, 2023, the Sikh Center of Virginia will celebrate Vaisakhi, also pronounced Baisakhi, which marks the first day of the month of Vaisakh and is traditionally held on April 13 or April 14 each year; Vaisakhi is primarily celebrated in Northern India as a spring harvest festival, but other Indian cultures and members of the Indian diaspora celebrate this festival around the world as well; and

WHEREAS, Vaisakhi is one of the most historically significant days of the year for Sikhs, who commemorate the day by holding kirtans, visiting local gurdwaras, attending community fairs, holding Nagar Kirtan processions, raising the Nishan Sahib, and gathering to socialize and share festive foods; and

WHEREAS, for the Sikh Center of Virginia and other members of the Sikh community, Vaisakhi is also a day of remembrance for events in the history of Sikhism that occurred in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent; the festival marks the birth of the Khalsa order initiated by Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th guru of Sikhism, on April 13, 1699; and

WHEREAS, Sikhs have been living in the United States for more than 100 years, and during the early 20th century, thousands of Sikh Americans worked on farms, in lumber mills and mines, and on the Oregon, Pacific and Eastern Railroad; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world, and today there are more than 30 million Sikhs worldwide and an estimated 500,000 Sikh Americans; Vaisakhi is one of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar for Sikhs throughout the Commonwealth and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Sikh Americans pursue diverse professions and make rich contributions to the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of the United States and the Commonwealth, including service as members of the United States Armed Forces and significant contributions to the nation in agriculture, information technology, small businesses, the hospitality industry, trucking, medicine, and technology; and

WHEREAS, Sikh Americans have distinguished themselves by fostering respect among all people through faith and service, and the Sikh Center of Virginia has played a vital role in community leadership in Northern Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Sikh Center of Virginia hereby be commended on the occasion of Vaisakhi on April 14, 2023; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Sikh Center of Virginia as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the center's contributions to the community.

INTRODUCED

HR492