

P R O C L A M A T I O N

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia and the nation have been influenced by the extraordinary cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of its residents;

and WHEREAS, there is an estimated one billion Hindus worldwide, and approximately 3.4 million Hindu Americans live across the nation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia is home to Hindu American community members;

and WHEREAS, Hindu Americans in Olympia represent diverse ethnic backgrounds, including individuals of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Malaysian, Indonesian, Afghani, Nepali, Bhutanese, Sri Lankan, Fijian, Caribbean, and European descent; and

WHEREAS, Olympia and our nation have greatly benefited from Hindu Americans, especially through the Vedanta philosophy, Ayurvedic medicine, classical Indian art, dance, music, meditation, yoga, literature, and community service;

and WHEREAS, Hindus are primarily an immigrant community and first started immigrating to Olympia and the United States in the early 1900s, and came in increasing numbers after the lifting of the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924 in 1943 and the abolishment of quotas for immigrants based on national origin in 1965; and

WHEREAS, Most Hindu immigrants have come to the United States as students, in search of better economic opportunities, or to unite with family members, while others have arrived in this country after facing religious persecution in their countries of origin; and

WHEREAS, The first Hindu temple in the United States was built in San Francisco, California, and at the dedication of the temple on January 7, 1906, it was proclaimed to be the “First Hindu Temple in the Whole Western World”; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans have greatly enriched higher education university systems by teaching numerous students, especially in the academic fields of astrophysics, computer science, engineering, law, planetary science, psychology, and neuroscience, and a majority of Hindu Americans are in high-skill occupations; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans have also contributed to many economic sectors and have particularly excelled in the areas of business, law, politics, information technology, medicine, and science; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans now serve in various levels of government across the state and nation, including three Members in the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, (CITY/COUNTY/STATE) Hindu temples, organizations, and individuals actively engage in seva, a Sanskrit word for selfless service, towards their fellow human beings through charity, public service, and the provision of free medical and legal services;

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans throughout Olympia celebrate numerous holidays and festivals, such as Diwali, which celebrates the victory of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance; and

WHEREAS, Despite their positive contributions to this nation, Hindu Americans face stereotypes and misconceptions about their heritage and have been the targets of bullying, discrimination, hate speech, and bias-motivated crimes; and

WHEREAS, Hinduphobia, defined as a set of antagonistic, destructive, and derogatory attitudes and behaviors towards Hinduism and Hindus that may manifest as prejudice, fear, or hatred, is also increasing in the U.S., especially on college campuses, in parallel with the rise of anti-Hindu hate crimes; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans promote the ideals of tolerance, pluralism, and religious freedom, which are inherent to their beliefs and respect the diversity of all faiths, and the Vedas, the 5,000-year-old texts of Hindu Americans, provide the basis for these core principles: “Truth is one, the wise call it by many names”; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Olympia City Council does hereby proclaim October 2022 as

HINDU AMERICAN AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION MONTH

And encourages our community to recognize the significant contributions made by community members of Hindu heritage.

SIGNED IN THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON THIS 18th DAY OF OCTOBER, 2022.

OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL

Mayor