

2025-J569

Senate Resolution No. 569

BY: Senator RAMOS

RECOGNIZING the contributions of the Sikh community and commemorating the Sikh massacre of 1984

WHEREAS, The Sikh religion, originating in the Punjab region of South Asia, is the fifth-largest faith in the world with over 25,000,000 followers; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism, founded in the 15th century in the Punjab region of South Asia, is a faith emphasizing equality, justice, selfless service, and devotion to God; and

WHEREAS, The Sikh community has long upheld these principles and made invaluable contributions to societies worldwide, including in New York State, where Sikhs have played a vital role in the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the state; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism is practiced by over 500,000 individuals in the United States, and Sikhs have been part of the American fabric for more than 120 years, arriving initially to work on farms, in lumber mills, mines, and on the Western Pacific Railroad, and subsequently settling in every State and territory, contributing significantly to the Nation's social, cultural, and economic landscape across diverse fields such as art, music, trucking, agriculture, information technology, law, medicine, and many more; and

WHEREAS, Sikhs have faced historical injustices, most notably in 1984 when thousands of Sikh men, women, and children were attacked and killed in coordinated acts of violence across India including in the capital territory of Delhi, the states of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Maharashtra, and India-administered Jammu and Kashmir; and

WHEREAS, This targeted and systematic violence has been recognized by some human rights organizations, historians, and governments around the world as a genocide against the Sikh people, as it sought to destroy a religious and ethnic community through mass killings, forced displacement, and destruction of Sikh institutions; and

WHEREAS, The Sikh community has demonstrated resilience and strength in the face of adversity, rebuilding their lives and continuing to uphold the tenets of their faith, including the commitment to community service and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, New York State, and particularly Queens, New York, is home to a thriving Sikh population, with numerous gurdwaras serving as centers of worship, education, and social service, including the Sikh Center of New York, which was established in 1972 as one of the first Sikh institutions in the region; and

WHEREAS, The Sikh community in New York has enriched the state through their contributions to various fields, including business, medicine, public service, law enforcement, and academia, while also fostering cross-cultural understanding and engagement through interfaith dialogue and humanitarian efforts; and

WHEREAS, Sikhs are known for their selfless service, exemplified by community kitchens that provide free meals to all people regardless of background, and through charitable initiatives addressing issues such as food insecurity, disaster relief, and social justice; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the horrific events of 1984 is a crucial step toward acknowledging historical injustices, promoting awareness, and standing in solidarity with the Sikh community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body honors the strength, resilience, and contributions of the Sikh community in New York State, acknowledging their vital role in the cultural and economic life of the State; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body recognizes the contributions of the Sikh community and commemorates the Sikh massacre of 1984 through official recognition and remembrance.