

2021-J348

Senate Resolution No. 348

BY: Senator THOMAS

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to recognize the cultural, religious, and interfaith importance of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as "Living Guru" of Sikhs in promoting peace and declaring Sikhs as a distinct ethnic and religious minority, in conjunction with the observance of Peace Day on October 20, 2021; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay just tribute to the cultural heritage of the ethnic groups which comprise and contribute to the richness and diversity of the community of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in keeping with its time-honored traditions, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to recognize the cultural, religious, and interfaith importance of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as "Living Guru" of Sikhs in promoting peace and declaring Sikhs as a distinct ethnic and religious minority, in conjunction with the observance of Peace Day on Wednesday, October 20, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Founded by Guru Nanak in 15th Century Punjab, India, the Sikh monotheistic tradition teaches its adherents to practice the universal principles of truthful living, service to humanity, and

devotion to God; and

WHEREAS, The Sikh community began immigrating to the United States in the late 1800s and has played an important role in developing this country and the State of New York while enriching American culture, history, economy, and diversity; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world with more than 25 million Sikhs worldwide, including more than 750,000 in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The religion's emphasis on loving service to humanity also inspires Sikhs living in New York to make lasting social contributions, such as providing free food to the less fortunate through the annual "Let's Share a Meal" event in New York County; and

WHEREAS, The 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, left the world and indicated to the generations ahead to avoid idol worship and recognize the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the principal scripture of Sikhism, as the "Living and Eleventh Guru" of the Sikh religion; and

WHEREAS, In a historic judgment delivered on March 29, 2000, the Supreme Court of India declared Guru Granth Sahib Ji as a "Juristic Person," further justifying Guru Gobind Singh Ji's declaration of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the "Living Guru"; and

WHEREAS, Although Sikhs have made immense contributions throughout history, they have long faced oppression and discrimination throughout the rest of the world; and

WHEREAS, According to the Sikh religion and history, Sikhs share a

unique set of beliefs and practices that are altogether different from other religions; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations office of High Commissioner for Human Rights has recognized Sikh Holy Scripture, Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, as a scripture meant to promote the interfaith and inter-religious harmony, peace and human rights; and

WHEREAS, Gurumukhi, the Sikh mother language, is endangered in most parts of the world; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York is committed to educating citizens about the world's religions, the value of religious diversity, tolerance grounded in First Amendment principles, a culture of mutual understanding, and the importance of reducing violence, all of which are consistent with Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji's teachings; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York seeks to further the diversity of its community and afford all residents the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared experiences of Sikhs and enforce laws for access to equal opportunity of humans irrespective of their caste, creed, color, and appearance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to recognize the cultural, religious, and interfaith importance of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as "Living Guru" of Sikhs in promoting peace and declaring Sikhs as a distinct ethnic and religious minority, in conjunction with the observance of Peace Day on October 20, 2021; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be

transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York; and Letitia James, Attorney General of the State of New York.