



Indian Diaspora Council

Indian Diaspora Council International

Shared heritage, aspirations and interests

www.IndianDiasporaCouncil.org

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PRESS RELEASE

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IDC Supports NYC Resolution 0146-2018 to establish Diwali as an official holiday in NYC Public Schools

The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) unequivocally endorses and supports New York City Resolution 0146-2018 “calling upon New York City Department of Education to establish Diwali as an official holiday for New York City public school students”.

Following its long tradition of embracing diversity and responding positively to the aspirations of its changing population and demographics, the City of New York has an unmatched history of responding favorably to be inclusive by bringing more opportunities, recognition, awareness, understanding and education to make this city the welcome home of millions -- the most diverse city in the world, to live, to succeed, to contribute, to collaborate, and to make it better today and tomorrow.

Diwali, a rich and enduring celebration known by many as the Festival of Lights, is celebrated throughout the world by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, as well as many other religions, groups, associations and individuals, transcending borders and religions. It is another historic opportunity for New York City to officially educate all of its students in public schools to learn about Diwali and join in celebrating a universal declaration of “light over darkness, good over evil, and to dispel ignorance and darkness”.

Diwali is publicly recognized and routinely celebrated in several official US federal, state and city venues with high profile and prominent ceremonies and performances: by the President at the White House, at the US Capitol, by Governors including New York State, and at city levels such as New York City – including in this very chamber and at Gracie Mansion. In addition, the occasion of Diwali has been recognized with many prominent Proclamations, Resolutions and Citations from federal, state and city officials from New York (from many of you in New York City Council) to Washington to California, recognizing Diwali as a universal celebration of “light over darkness and good over evil”.

With the population in the USA of people with origins in South Asia exceeding 4 million, including a significant percentage in New York tri-state region, the prominence of Diwali celebration among many is certainly becoming more visible and widely accepted. It is to be noted that people with origins in South Asia in New York account for approximately 21% of new immigrants in 2016.

Approval by New York City would not be without NY precedent: Six Long Island schools have declared Diwali holiday in 2018. East Meadow, East Williston, Hicksville, Syosset, Half Hollow Hills & Herricks.

New York City public schools are the incubators where young minds are nurtured to become learned, informed and supportive of our celebrated diversity. By establishing Diwali as an official public school holiday, this body would certainly enhance the learning experiences of New York City children.

The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) urges approval of New York City Resolution 0146-2018, a fitting and timely tribute to the city and to our children, especially at this time of US history..

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*The **Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC)**, established in 1997 and headquartered in New York, USA, is an international non-profit, non-political and secular organization with global affiliates, chapters and membership in 21 countries, with the objective to embrace, engage, and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations, and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.*