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Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

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In the Council of the District of Columbia

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To recognize the 550th Anniversary of Gurpurab, the birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder and first Guru of the Sikh faith.

WHEREAS, November 12, 2019, will be the 550th Anniversary of the birth of the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, also known to Sikh followers as Gurpurab;

WHEREAS, Guru Nanak was the first of 10 Gurus, whose teachings became the core values and tenants of Sikhism, developed in the Punjab region of the Indian Subcontinent at the end of the 15th Century;

WHEREAS, Sikhism is the 5th largest religion in the world with over 25 million followers worldwide and over 750,000 followers in the United States;

WHEREAS, the main tenant of Sikhism is embodied as ‘Ik Onkar,’ or Oneness, which is explained as equality of all as all are one, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity, gender, or caste;

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia is home to the National Gurdwara Sikh Temple, located at 3801 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.;

WHEREAS, the National Gurdwara is a place of worship, reflection, and community gathering, open 7 days a week, to people of all faiths, race, or ethnicity;

WHEREAS, the National Gurdwara offers many services for the public, including religious services, Punjabi language classes, and full meals, called ‘Langar’ served by the congregation after religious services, as a means of ‘Seva’ or selfless service to the community, to anyone who comes to the temple;

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department was the first police department in the nation to allow Sikhs to serve with features of their faith, including their beards and turbans;

WHEREAS, per a 2017 National Public Radio article about Sikhism, 60% of Americans know nothing about Sikhs;

WHEREAS, Sikhs have often been targeted in hate crimes, particularly after the September 11, 2001 attacks due to the use of turbans in their religious garb; and

WHEREAS, education and awareness about other cultures and faiths can help to achieve a greater appreciation for our diversity.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, this resolution may be cited as the “550th Gurpurab Celebration Recognition Resolution of 2019”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes the 550th Anniversary of Gurpurab as an opportunity to expand education and awareness of the District’s large and growing Sikh community.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.