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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 319 Session of  
2018

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INTRODUCED BY McGARRIGLE, DINNIMAN, FONTANA, BROWNE, SCHWANK AND  
RAFFERTY, APRIL 17, 2018

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INTRODUCED AND ADOPTED, APRIL 17, 2018

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of April 2018 as "Sikh Awareness and  
2 Appreciation Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Sikhism is the world's fifth-largest religion, a  
4 monotheistic faith founded in the Punjab region of India  
5 approximately 500 years ago; and

6 WHEREAS, The Sikh religion is based on a belief in one God,  
7 universal equality and basic values of truth, nonviolence,  
8 tolerance and peace; and

9 WHEREAS, Most of the world's 25 million Sikhs live in India,  
10 but more than 500,000 make the United States their home; and

11 WHEREAS, In the 1970s, the Sikhs first entered Pennsylvania;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, In April 1973, responding to the social and  
14 religious need of a growing population of followers of Hinduism  
15 and other Indic religions, the Sikhs purchased a seven-acre  
16 parcel of land in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, with plans for a  
17 Hindu Temple; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1986, the name of the temple was changed from

1 Hindu Temple to Hindu Jain Temple operated by the Hindu Temple  
2 Society of North America, Pittsburgh; and

3 WHEREAS, In September 1990, the construction work was  
4 completed on the gurdwara, a Sikh center of worship; and

5 WHEREAS, Hindu Jain Temple, the first unified Hindu Jain  
6 Temple in North America, is a unique example of understanding,  
7 tolerance and appreciation of diverse religious practices and  
8 traditions; and

9 WHEREAS, For children and generations to come, the gurdwara  
10 is a link to Sikh roots and a symbol of great Hindu heritage;  
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's Sikh community endeavors to enhance  
13 understanding and respect among people of different religions by  
14 leading and participating in interfaith thanksgiving prayers at  
15 various places of worship and inviting various faith leaders and  
16 members of their congregations to gurdwaras; and

17 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania stands with the Sikh community in  
18 denouncing hate crimes directed toward any individual based on  
19 their religious beliefs; and

20 WHEREAS, Since September 11, 2001, Sikhs are often mistaken  
21 for Taliban members or followers of Al Qaeda because of the  
22 commonality of their beards and turbans, and are subjected to a  
23 disproportionately high rate of hate crimes; and

24 WHEREAS, The Sikh-American community continues to peacefully  
25 overcome attacks on its identity and practices, whether in the  
26 form of school harassment, employment discrimination or fatal  
27 shootings, including the 1984 Sikh Massacre where thousands of  
28 individuals were killed in India, the murders of six Sikhs  
29 during the Oak Creek, Wisconsin, Sikh gurdwara shooting on  
30 August 5, 2012, and the shooting of a Sikh man that occurred in

1 Kent, Washington, on March 3, 2017; and

2 WHEREAS, The faithful service of the Sikh-American community  
3 to this Commonwealth merits appreciation as an integral thread  
4 in the fabric of American plurality; and

5 WHEREAS, Our nation and this Commonwealth are enriched by the  
6 unparalleled diversity of our residents; therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That the Senate designate the month of April 2018  
8 as "Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month" in Pennsylvania.