



வாசிங்டன் வட்டாரத் தமிழ்ச்சங்கம் Tamil Sangam of Greater Washington, Inc.

(A Registered Non-Profit Cultural and Secular organization)

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March 11, 2020

TESTTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 906 March 12th, 2020 - Health and Government Operations Committee

HB-906 General Provisions - Commemorative Days - Pongal Day /January as Tamil Heritage Month

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members,

I am Kolandavel "Rom" Ramasamy, from Clarksville, Howard County and I support HB 906. I have been a Tamil American for the last 30 years and a proud Marylander for 20 years. It's with honor and privilege that I submit this testimony in support of HB 906 to Commemorate January 14th as Pongal day and January as Tamil Heritage Month in Maryland.

Pongal Day is the Thanksgiving Day for Tamils and celebrated as the Harvest festival. Pongal falls on the First day of Tamil New Year Calendar, Month of Thai (January) which is the 14th day of January. Pongal is a non-religious celebration and celebrated regardless of their religious affiliation similar to Thanks Giving in the USA.

About 74 Million Tamils all over the world, who speak the Tamil language, which is one of the oldest and one of the seven Classical languages of the world. Tamils live mostly in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India, other countries such as Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, South Africa, Mauritius, Burma, Canada, UK and Europe. In 2019, we have established a Tamil Chair at the **Harvard University** for the non-Tamils to do research and cherish the richness of this language.

On this Pongal Day and Tamil heritage month, the richness of Tamil Culture and historical traditions are symbolized. The Tamil Americans/Marylanders help to preserve this very ancient rich culture and traditions by celebrating Pongal and Tamil Heritage. It also gives us the emotional link to our homelands and Tamils all around the world.

I humbly request for a favorable report on House Bill 906

Sincerely,

Kolandavel "Rom" Ramasamy

Join Secretary – Tamil Sangam of Greater Washington

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