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Supriya Ghimire
17-year-old college freshman
March 9TH, 2022
Harry Bhandari Senate Bill 0470 Written Testimony

Good afternoon members of the Education Health & Environmental Affairs Committee, my name is Supriya Ghimire. I am a 17-year-old College freshman currently in my second semester at Mount St. Mary's University. I will be speaking on behalf of the non-resident Nepali association I am here today to present my testimony regarding senate bill 0470 with the agenda to promote South Asian culture and officially declare October 5th as Dashain Day. Dashain is known as a Holiday commonly celebrated upon The Nepali community. The main idea of Dashain is to celebrate the victory of good over evil. Being the first state to acknowledge Dashain would be a huge leap towards equality. This not only would benefit the Nepali community allowing them to celebrate their holiday proudly, but it would also allow Maryland to be seen as a state who cares about the voice of their minority groups

Often, I'm asked, "Hey where are you from" to which I reply, "Nepal, it's a small country in South Asia". Other than being known for mount Everest, Nepal isn't very commonly talked about. It baffles me to see the lack of knowledge our society possess about my county.

The diversity in Maryland is truly astonishing seeing the beauty of every culture come together in order to create a community. We as America need to strive to be a country that respects all holidays and accepts the importance of cultures everywhere. For us to spread equality upon the rest of the country we need to start somewhere, so why don't we start here?

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Secular Maryland

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March 10, 2022

SB 470 - OPPOSE

General Provisions - Commemorative Days - Dashain Day

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice -Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

The Secular Coalition for Maryland supports government neutrality between competing religious beliefs including between religious beliefs and anti-religious beliefs more generally. The best way to protect the liberty of religious minorities to exercise their religious beliefs is for the government to refrain from exhibiting favoritism. One way to avoid bias between religions and between religious and anti-religious perspectives is to commentate every religious and anti-religious event throughout the world annually. That is impractical. Accordingly, it is a step in the wrong direction to add a religiously motivated event to the holidays commemorated each year as proposed by this bill. Let's instead go in the other direction and adopt a government policy of not passing laws to commemorate any of the many different religiously motivated events held within or outside the United States.

Respectfully,
Mathew Goldstein
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Bowie, MD