
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 254 Session of
2024

INTRODUCED BY KEARNEY, KANE, SANTARSIERO, HAYWOOD, FONTANA AND
SCHWANK, APRIL 5, 2024

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, APRIL 5, 2024

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of April 2024 as "Sikh Awareness and
2 Appreciation Month" in Pennsylvania to promote public
3 awareness of the Sikh faith, recognize the important
4 contributions of the Sikh community and combat anti-Sikh
5 bigotry.

6 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is enriched by the diversity of its
7 residents who have cultivated a climate of social tolerance and
8 intellectual pluralism that has sustained this Commonwealth
9 throughout its history; and

10 WHEREAS, Founded by Guru Nanak in 15th century Punjab, India,
11 the Sikh monotheistic tradition teaches its adherents to
12 practice the universal principles of truthful living, service to
13 humanity and devotion to God; and

14 WHEREAS, The Sikh community began immigrating to the United
15 States in the late 1800s and has played an important role in
16 developing this country and this Commonwealth while enriching
17 American culture, history, economy and diversity; and

18 WHEREAS, Sikhism is the world's fifth-largest religion, with
19 nearly 30 million adherents worldwide, including roughly 1

1 million in the United States; and

2 WHEREAS, Believing that every human being, regardless of
3 race, gender or creed, is equal in the eyes of God, Sikhism
4 emerged as a pioneer of social justice, with female
5 participation in religious ceremonies widely encouraged and
6 interfaith efforts to fight oppression regularly pursued; and

7 WHEREAS, The religion's emphasis on loving service to
8 humanity also inspires Sikhs in this Commonwealth to make
9 lasting social contributions, such as providing free food to the
10 less fortunate; and

11 WHEREAS, Despite their progressive principles and charitable
12 deeds, the American Sikh community commonly experiences
13 discrimination, often by individuals who are unaware of the
14 beliefs and practices of the faith; and

15 WHEREAS, Sikhs disproportionately experience school bullying,
16 with estimates indicating that more than 50% of all Sikh
17 children, and about 67% of turbaned-Sikh children, endure
18 physical or verbal abuse while at school; and

19 WHEREAS, Nearly 60% of Americans admit to knowing nothing
20 about the religion or its practitioners, and national rates of
21 anti-Sikh bigotry rose dramatically following the September 11th
22 terrorist attacks; and

23 WHEREAS, Deadly assaults against the Sikh community, such as
24 the hate-inspired murder of six worshipers at the Sikh Gurdwara
25 of Wisconsin in August 2012, have also become all-too-common
26 occurrences across the country; and

27 WHEREAS, Although the Sikh community continues to peacefully
28 overcome each attack on its cultural identity, the Commonwealth
29 wants to increase public awareness of Sikh faith and memorialize
30 the lasting contributions of its Sikh residents; and

1 WHEREAS, During the early 20th century, thousands of Sikh
2 Americans worked on farms, in lumber mills and mines and on the
3 Oregon, Pacific and Eastern Railroad; and

4 WHEREAS, Sikh Americans pursue diverse professions and make
5 rich contributions to the social, cultural and economic vibrancy
6 of the United States, including service as members of the United
7 States Armed Forces and significant contributions to our great
8 nation in agriculture, information technology, small businesses,
9 the hotel industry, trucking, medicine and technology; and

10 WHEREAS, Sikh Americans distinguished themselves by fostering
11 respect among all people through faith and service; and

12 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth is committed to educating residents
13 about the world's religions, the value of religious diversity,
14 tolerance grounded in First Amendment principles, a culture of
15 mutual understanding and the diminution of violence; and

16 WHEREAS, Because Vaisakhi, an annual festival that is held in
17 April to commemorate the creation of the Khalsa Panth, a
18 fellowship of devout Sikhs, is one of the most important Sikh
19 holidays, it is all together fitting and proper for the
20 Commonwealth to recognize the month of April as "Sikh Awareness
21 and Appreciation Month" in order to celebrate its Sikh community
22 and combat anti-Sikh bigotry; therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize the month of April 2024
24 as "Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month" in Pennsylvania to
25 promote public awareness of the Sikh faith, recognize the
26 important contributions of the Sikh community and combat anti-
27 Sikh bigotry.