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R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Diwali, the festival of lights, is being celebrated across the world by followers of Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism on November 12, 2023; and

WHEREAS, The five-day-long celebration derives its name from the Sanskrit word *dipavali*, meaning "row of lights," and it is one of the largest and most anticipated religious festivals for adherents of the Hindu, Jain, and Sikh faiths; it spans the dark half of the lunar month Ashvina and the light half of the lunar month Karttika, which typically falls in late October and November on the Gregorian calendar; and

WHEREAS, While Diwali generally symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, the specific traditions associated with the holiday vary between regions and religions; Hindus customarily light *diyas*, small earthenware lamps filled with oil, on the night of the new moon to welcome the presence of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity; the people of Bengal worship the goddess Kali, while in northern India, the festival celebrates the royal homecoming of Rama to the city of Ayodhya after vanquishing the king of demons; in South India, festivities center around another story of good prevailing over evil, the legend of Krishna's defeat of the demon Narakasura; and

WHEREAS, For Sikhs, Diwali commemorates the return of Guru Hargobind, the sixth guru and an important figure in the Sikh faith, from his captivity in the city of Gwalior; Diwali also holds tremendous significance to people of the Jain faith, for whom it represents Mahavira's attainment of nirvana, or complete knowledge and enlightenment; although it is not a major festival of Buddhism, it is celebrated by some Buddhists to honor Emperor Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism in the 3rd century BCE; and

WHEREAS, Diwali is a celebration for people of all ages; in many homes, wives perform a series of rituals to bless their husbands with longevity, and husbands present their wives with a special gift to reward their care and devotion; families, friends, and colleagues alike also exchange gifts during Diwali as a gesture of love and affection, and the occasion further includes a feast complete with a variety of desserts; children participate in a range of customs, which include lighting *diyas* and candles and setting off sparklers, and the final day of the festival specifically celebrates the bond shared by brothers and sisters; and

WHEREAS, Every year, the festival of Diwali brings together more than a billion people across the globe in the spirit of joy, unity, and hope for humankind, and it is indeed fitting to acknowledge the profound importance of the holiday to many who reside in our state; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas Legislature, 3rd Called Session, hereby recognize the festival of Diwali 2023 and extend warmest wishes to all those who are taking part in the observance.