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**SR-27** (2023-2024)

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ENROLLED JULY 14, 2023

PASSED IN SENATE JULY 13, 2023

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 21, 2023

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2023–2024 REGULAR SESSION

## SENATE RESOLUTION

**NO. 27**

Introduced by Senator Cortese

April 12, 2023

Relative to Sikhism.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SR 27, Cortese.

WHEREAS, California is home to a diverse population with a rich cultural heritage of various ethnic groups that contribute to the richness and diversity of the state; and

WHEREAS, Sikhs, who are a distinct ethnic and religious community that originated in Punjab, India, began immigrating to the United States in the late 1800s and have played an important role in developing this country and the State of California while enriching American culture, history, economy, and diversity; and

WHEREAS, In 1912, the first Sikh house of worship (Gurdwara) in the United States, the Stockton Sikh Temple, was founded by Jawala Singh and Wasakha Singh. The following year, the congregation formed the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world with more than 25,000,000 Sikhs worldwide, including more than 500,000 in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism places a primary focus on equality and the oneness of humanity and encourages those to practice “seva,” meaning self-service, such as providing free food to the less fortunate in the community, or helping at the Gurdwara, including cleaning, washing dishes, or serving in the “langar,” meaning the kitchen, where all are welcome to sit and eat together; and

WHEREAS, Although Sikhs have made immense contributions throughout history, they have long faced oppression and discrimination throughout the world, including the United States, which did not enact legislation authorizing Sikhs and other East

Indian immigrants to naturalize as United States citizens until 1946; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights document entitled 18 Commitments on "Faith for Rights" included teaching and scripture from the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji meant to promote interfaith and interreligious harmony, peace, and human rights; and

WHEREAS, According to Sikh religion and history, Sikhs share a unique set of beliefs, practices, and ancestry; and

WHEREAS, The values of tolerance and religious diversity grounded in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the state's promotion of a culture of mutual understanding, and the importance of reducing violence are all consistent with Sikhism and the teachings of the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate seeks to further the diversity of the state and afford all residents the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared experiences of Sikhs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes and acknowledges the significant contributions made by Californians of Sikh heritage to our state, and by adoption of this resolution, seeks to afford all Californians the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.