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**Adam Mathews**  
State Representative

Chair John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and all honorable members of the House State and Local Government Committee, it is my pleasure today to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 72, which would designate October as Hindu Heritage Month in Ohio and recognize the culture, history, and achievements of Hindu Americans in our great state.

October is celebrated throughout the United States and Ohio as Hindu Heritage Month due to its significance within Hindu culture and religion. Important Hindu holidays and commemorative days often fall within the month of October, including the holiday Diwali, which symbolizes the spiritual victory of light over darkness and good over evil, as well as the birth day of Mahatma Gandhi. Every year, thousands of Hindu Americans across Ohio will come together to celebrate their heritage and cultural traditions, and through state recognition, we aim to join and highlight these celebrations throughout Ohio.

Within the 56<sup>th</sup> House District and throughout Warren County, I am fortunate to represent a thriving community of Hindu Americans. In particular, the City of Mason and Deerfield Township are home to one of the largest populations of Hindu Americans in Ohio, enriching our communities and adding welcome vibrancy to the cultural fabric of our county. Additionally, these families' contributions in fields such as business, technology, science, and education have similarly enriched the lives of all Ohioans, and the vitality of these communities stands as a testament to Ohio's place in the nation as a leader in growth and development. Ohio is home to millions of individuals, each with a unique story, and just as our country has endured as a melting pot of cultures and traditions, so too in Warren County do we aim to bolster strong communities and welcome cultural celebration.

The tremendous contributions of Hindu Americans throughout Ohio have been recognized in recent years in annual proclamations issued by Governor DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Husted. By passing this bipartisan legislation, we aim to continue this tradition and ensure that recognition of Hindu Heritage Month in Ohio continues long into the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today, and I will now turn it over to my joint sponsor, Representative Anita Somani.