



**Representative Anita Somani MD**  
11<sup>th</sup> House District

### HB 72 Sponsor Testimony

Thank you Chair John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the State and Local Committee for allowing me to testify today in support of House Bill 72 to designate the month of October as Hindu Heritage Month.

The goal of this bill is to celebrate the diverse Hindu culture and educate those around us about the important contributions Hindus have made in our communities across the state. It is a time to recognize the rich culture, traditions and achievements of Hindu-Americans. It is also a time to recognize the importance of celebrating cultural, religious and gender diversity. Inclusive communities enrich all of us.

October is a special month in the Hindu religion, as it honors the birth of Mahatma Gandhi and is when many Hindu holidays like Navratri and Diwali are celebrated.

Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world, representing about 15% of the world's population. It is now the fourth largest religion here in the United States. If this bill passes, Ohio will become just the third state to pass a law designating Hindu Heritage Month. We must work to ensure all Ohioans can understand and appreciate the cultural contributions Hindus have made and continue to make here in this state.

Once again, thank you for the chance to speak on behalf of House Bill 72, and I welcome any questions you may have.