

1 AN ACT concerning government.

2 WHEREAS, It is appropriate and right to celebrate a
3 diversity of cultures and heritages, and such celebration
4 serves as a reminder that despite our differing backgrounds,
5 everyone in Illinois is bound by a common hope for a better and
6 more inclusive future for our children; and

7 WHEREAS, The Arab American community has a long and
8 integral history in the United States; and

9 WHEREAS, For over a century, Arab Americans have been
10 making valuable contributions to virtually every aspect of
11 American society, including medicine, law, business,
12 technology, government, and culture; and

13 WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of Arab Americans have served
14 during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam
15 War, the Iraq War, and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq after
16 September 11, 2001; and

17 WHEREAS, The history of Arab Americans in American life
18 often remains neglected and has been riddled with
19 misunderstanding and bigotry; and

20 WHEREAS, Men and women of Arab descent have shared their
21 rich culture, strong work ethic, and dedication to education,

1 while embracing the American spirit of opportunity and helping
2 us build a better nation and State for all; and

3 WHEREAS, It is estimated that there are approximately
4 450,000 people of Arab American descent in Illinois with more
5 than 100,000 Arab American voters registered; and

6 WHEREAS, We recognize and celebrate the contributions to
7 cultural diversity, economic growth, and the overall
8 development of our State and nation made by the Arab American
9 community; therefore

10 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
11 **represented in the General Assembly:**

12 Section 5. The State Commemorative Dates Act is amended by
13 adding Section 6 as follows:

14 (5 ILCS 490/6 new)

15 Sec. 6. Arab American Heritage Month. The month of April of
16 each year is designated as Arab American Heritage Month to be
17 observed throughout the State as a month to recognize the
18 valuable contributions of Arab Americans to this State and to
19 the various aspects of American society.

20 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon

1 becoming law.