

AN ACT concerning government.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(5 ILCS 490/6 new)

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

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon

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HB5971 Enrolled

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becoming law.