

118TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 1155

Expressing support for the recognition of April as “National Arab American Heritage Month” (NAAHM) and celebrating the heritage and culture of Arab Americans in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 17, 2024

Ms. TLAIB (for herself, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. CARSON, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the recognition of April as “National Arab American Heritage Month” (NAAHM) and celebrating the heritage and culture of Arab Americans in the United States.

Whereas today the Arab American Institute estimates that roughly 3,700,000 Arab Americans are living in the United States from a variety of faith backgrounds, including both Christians and Muslims originating from any of the 22 Arabic-speaking countries;

Whereas persons of Arab descent have throughout their history in the United States generously shared their culture, music, and food with their fellow Americans and contributed disproportionately to their numbers to the economy

and society of the United States, having brought with them to the United States their resilient family values, strong work ethic, dedication to education, and diversity that have added strength to United States democracy;

Whereas Arab American entrepreneurs from the first door-to-door peddlers, to owners of restaurants, bakeries, and stores, to large manufacturers of men's and women's clothes (Farah and Hagggar, for example) have been hard-working, self-sufficient contributors to the United States economy;

Whereas the first recorded Arab in America was the Moroccan Mostafa (Estanaico) Zemmouri in 1527, and Arab Americans, including the early Syrians and Lebanese, began arriving in significant numbers to the shores of the United States in the 1870s, including Antonio Bishallany, who arrived in Boston in 1854, and another early wave arrival, Dr. Joseph Arbeeley, who became American citizens, and waves of other Arab Americans that followed;

Whereas Arab Americans have served the United States as first responders, in the public sector, and as public servants from both political parties, past and present, in the United States Government, the Congress, the Senate, as exemplified by James Abourezk, the first Arab American Senator who was raised by Lebanese immigrant parents in South Dakota, and as ambassadors, cabinet members, as well as all other Arab Americans in uniform today;

Whereas Arab Americans have and continue to play a critical role in America's social justice and human rights movements, such as the civil rights, labor organizing, and environmental justice movements;

Whereas recently Arab Americans' activism continues to play a key role in present day struggles for social justice and human rights such as the movement for Black lives, the ceasefire movement to end the genocide of Palestinians, and many more;

Whereas Arab Americans have excelled in science, engineering, medicine, education, scholarship, and architecture, including—

(1) organic chemist Elias James Corey (Nobel Prize 1990);

(2) Ahmed Zewail, a chemist investigating transition reactions (Nobel Prize 1999);

(3) Mostafa El-Sayed, a chemical physicist and leading nanoscience researcher, a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a United States National Medal of Science laureate who sat on the President's National Medal of Science Committee in 2014;

(4) Dr. Farouk El-Baz, a pioneer in space photography; and

(5) Dr. Michael DeBakey, a cardiovascular surgeon and inventor of ventricular assist devices and aorta repair procedures;

Whereas, in 1959, Mohamed Atalla, an Egyptian-American engineer who was an important pioneer and contributor to the early field of modern electronics, invented the metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect transistor, which is the most-frequently manufactured device in history and hailed by the United States Patent and Trademark Office as one of the most important inventions in electronics;

Whereas Arab Americans have excelled in sports, like quarterback and Heisman Trophy winner Doug Flutie, and in entertainment, including actors, singers, comedians, and

musicians such as actor, singer, and founder of St. Jude's Children's Hospital, Danny Thomas, Emmy-winner Tony Shalhoub, comedian, and commentator Dean Obeidallah, gifted musician Dr. Ali Jihad Racy, award-winning violinist Simon Shaheen, and so many others;

Whereas, according to Census Bureau data, Arabic is one of the fastest-growing languages in the United States, and Arab American journalists, newspaper editors, and writers have informed their communities and others in Arabic and English, adding to the body of American literature and reporting beginning with Nabeeb and Ibrahim Arbeely, editors of the first Arab American newspaper, Kawkab Amirka, the distinguished writer of the first Arab American novel, "The Book of Khalid", Ameen Rihani, the renowned poet, writer, and artist, author of "The Prophet", among his other numerous writings, and founder of the Pen Bond writers, the beloved writer Kahlil Gibran, the late New York Times reporter Anthony Shadid, White House Press Corps Correspondent Helen Thomas (recognized by the World Almanac as one of the 25 most influential women in America), poet and writer Naomi Shihab Nye, novelist Diana Abu-Jaber, and hundreds more;

Whereas Arab American women have provided excellent role models such as Emmy-winning actor Marlo Thomas, actress Kathy Najimy, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, artist and poet Etel Adnan, National Public Radio host Diane Reim, and the doctor who raised awareness that children were being poisoned by lead in Flint, Michigan, Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, plus all the women previously mentioned and thousands of other accomplished women not herein listed;

Whereas “National Arab American Heritage Month” (NAAHM) is necessary to address the misconceptions, misinformation, Arabophobia, anti-Arabism, and discrimination against Arab Americans by celebrating their accomplishments and providing factual information about Arab American culture and persons and the need for public education, awareness, and policies that are culturally competent when describing, discussing, and addressing the impacts of being Arab American in all aspects of American society;

Whereas, in 2017, Arab America established NAAHM, and President Biden recognized the celebration of NAAHM in an April 19, 2021, letter to the Arab America Foundation, making him the first sitting United States President to do so, and the Department of State recognized April as NAAHM in 2021;

Whereas last year at least 48 States and territories have taken steps to recognize April as NAAHM, including the governments of—

- (1) Alabama;
- (2) Alaska;
- (3) Arizona;
- (4) Arkansas;
- (5) California;
- (6) Colorado;
- (7) Connecticut;
- (8) Delaware;
- (9) the District of Columbia;
- (10) Georgia;
- (11) Hawaii;
- (12) Illinois;
- (13) Indiana;

- (14) Iowa;
- (15) Kansas;
- (16) Kentucky;
- (17) Louisiana;
- (18) Maine;
- (19) Maryland;
- (20) Massachusetts;
- (21) Michigan;
- (22) Minnesota;
- (23) Mississippi;
- (24) Missouri;
- (25) Montana;
- (26) Nebraska;
- (27) Nevada;
- (28) New Jersey;
- (29) New Mexico;
- (30) New Hampshire;
- (31) New York;
- (32) North Carolina;
- (33) North Dakota;
- (34) Ohio;
- (35) Oklahoma;
- (36) Oregon;
- (37) Pennsylvania;
- (38) Rhode Island;
- (39) South Carolina;
- (40) South Dakota;
- (41) Texas;
- (42) Utah;
- (43) Vermont;
- (44) Virginia;
- (45) Washington;
- (46) West Virginia;

- (47) Wisconsin; and
- (48) Wyoming;

Whereas numerous cities, towns, and counties across America have taken steps to recognize April as NAAHM, including—

- (1) Los Angeles, California;
- (2) Orange County, California;
- (3) San Francisco, California;
- (4) San Diego, California;
- (5) Gainesville, Florida;
- (6) Orlando, Florida;
- (7) Atlanta, Georgia;
- (8) Chicago, Illinois;
- (9) Cook County, Illinois;
- (10) Baltimore, Maryland;
- (11) Dallas, Texas;
- (12) Detroit, Michigan;
- (13) Wayne County, Michigan;
- (14) Dearborn, Michigan;
- (15) Dearborn Heights, Michigan;
- (16) Flint, Michigan;
- (17) Yonkers, New York,
- (18) Westchester County, New York;
- (19) Raleigh, North Carolina;
- (20) Cuyahoga County, Ohio;
- (21) Cleveland, Ohio;
- (22) Toledo, Ohio;
- (23) Portland, Oregon;
- (24) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
- (25) Dallas, Texas;
- (26) Alexandria, Virginia;
- (27) Richmond, Virginia;
- (28) Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and

(29) Madison, Wisconsin;

Whereas 4 States have passed permanent legislation designating the month of April as NAAHM, including Illinois, Oregon, Virginia, and California, and several States are considering permanent legislation, including Ohio, Michigan, and Rhode Island; and

Whereas the incredible contributions and heritage of Arab Americans have helped to build a better Nation: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the designation of “National Arab
3 American Heritage Month”;

4 (2) esteems the integral role of Arab Americans
5 in the economy, culture, and identity of the United
6 States; and

7 (3) urges the people of the United States to
8 serve National Arab American Heritage Month with
9 appropriate programs and activities that recognize
10 and celebrate the unique contributions of Arab
11 Americans.

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