

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 268

Approved May 10, 2019

WHEREAS, The Cambodian people have a long and rich cultural heritage symbolized by the temple city Angkor Wat, considered one of the Wonders of the Ancient World, built between the 9th and 12th centuries, that stands as a living icon of the endurance and genius of all Cambodians throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, The relationship between the United States and Cambodia had been forged through educational and professional exchange, and therefore in 1975, with the impending overthrow of the government by the totalitarian Khmer Rouge regime, the United States accepted over 4,000 Cambodian evacuees to ensure their safety; and

WHEREAS, Between April 17, 1975, and January 7, 1979, the Khmer Rouge of Democratic Kampuchea, led by Pol Pot, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, and other members of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kampuchea and their agents, committed acts of genocide and other crimes against humanity; and

WHEREAS, The genocide and other crimes against humanity committed against the people of Cambodia, including various religious groups and ethnic minorities, during the Khmer Rouge regime led to the deaths of over 2 million Cambodians, which was 21 percent of the nation's population; and

WHEREAS, The Khmer Rouge regime also sought to eliminate all aspects of Cambodian culture by systematically killing those with education, separating families, and destroying institutions such as Buddhist temples, schools, libraries, dance, and music; and

WHEREAS, Countless victims have since come forward to tell their stories of imprisonment, starvation, slavery, rape, and systematic forced marriage; and

WHEREAS, After the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, over 140,000 Cambodians came to the United States as refugees, a group of special humanitarian and foreign policy concern to the United States because of the well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion and thus in need of protection in accordance with the United Nations' 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; and

WHEREAS, The Cambodian Society of Rhode Island was formed in 1982 with the purpose to assist the Cambodian people in the state of Rhode Island with regard to charitable, educational, and cultural concerns; and

WHEREAS, The mission of The Cambodian Society of Rhode Island is to bridge the gap between the Khmer community and the general public through cultural awareness campaigns, programs that enhance our culture and being the agency that advocates on behalf of the Cambodian community's interest in Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, Since 1981, the mission of Wat Thormikaram of Rhode Island (Khmer Buddhist Society of New England) is to provide and maintain a Buddhist center for the Cambodian people of Rhode Island, to provide traditional religious and cultural services for people of all ethnicities and origins who wish to learn, understand, practice, respect and protect Cambodian culture and the tenets of the Buddhist faith, and to help younger Cambodians appreciate their ancestral traditions, culture, and heritage; and

WHEREAS, The Cambodian population in Rhode Island in 1987 numbered 7,000 and it has since grown to 10-13,000. Many live in Providence, but others have moved to suburbs such as Cranston, Warwick, and Woonsocket.

WHEREAS, Cambodian Genocide Remembrance Day will honor the survivors and their descendants for their courage and contributions to our state and country. The day will serve as a way to remember those who lost their lives in Cambodia and in genocides around the world; and

WHEREAS, As public servants and the elected representatives of the people of Providence, the City Council has an obligation to recognize the suffering and loss of the Cambodian people and their accomplishments and perseverance in reestablishing families, communities, and enhancing the cultural and historical diversity of our state and nation should be recognized and honored;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council does hereby proclaim the week of April 17 as "Cambodian Genocide Remembrance Week," in perpetuity to commemorate the Cambodian Genocide of 1975 to 1979, and in honor of this day the Cambodian flag will be flown over Providence City Hall the week of April 17.

IN CITY COUNCIL

MAY 02 2019

READ AND PASSED

Sakina Mats
PRES.

Sham Belkhat
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

[Signature]

Mayor
Date: *5/10/19*