

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 176**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 14, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY
District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Condemns terrorist attacks on Sikhs in Afghanistan and supports religious freedom.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



- 1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** condemning the terrorist attacks on
2 Sikhs in Afghanistan and supporting the religious freedom of the
3 Sikh people.
4
- 5 **WHEREAS**, Human rights and social justice form the foundation of
6 Sikh belief, with Sikh history featuring Sikh Gurus that
7 championed religious freedom and justice; and
8 **WHEREAS**, Afghanistan, a predominantly Muslim country, was
9 home to as many as 250,000 Sikhs before a devastating civil war
10 in the 1990s drove many Sikhs out of the country; and
11 **WHEREAS**, Sikhs have suffered from ongoing discrimination and
12 violence in Afghanistan and have often been targeted by
13 extremist groups, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria also
14 known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); and
15 **WHEREAS**, On July 1, 2018, a suicide bomber specifically targeted
16 Sikhs in an attack in Jalalabad, the capital of the eastern Afghan
17 province of Nangarhar, that killed at least 19 Sikhs; and
18 **WHEREAS**, On September 23, 2019, during a meeting on religious
19 freedom at the United Nations Headquarters, the President of the
20 United States of America, the Vice President, and the Secretary
21 of State decried the atrocities committed against Sikhs in
22 different parts of the world and called for the protection of
23 religious freedom worldwide; and
24 **WHEREAS**, On March 24, 2020, ISIL gunmen and suicide bombers
25 attacked a Sikh Gurudwara, a Sikh place of worship, in Kabul,
26 Afghanistan, killing 25 Sikh worshippers; and
27 **WHEREAS**, These ongoing attacks and threats against the Sikh
28 people underline the need for a united global fight against all
29 forms of international terrorism and accountability for all entities
30 that support or conduct terrorism; and
31 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey houses one of the largest concentrations of
32 Sikh Americans in the country, with about 100,000 Sikh
33 Americans living in the State; and
34 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey should be committed to the global protection
35 of Sikhs, as a minority religion; and
36 **WHEREAS**, The Sikh community has made positive cultural, social,
37 economic, and political contributions in New Jersey, including
38 holding notable public office positions and promoting peace and
39 love; and
40 **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Legislature condemns these heinous
41 acts of violence, which constitute an affront to American values
42 of tolerance and freedom; now, therefore
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- 44 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
45 *Jersey (the Senate concurring):*
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- 47 1. The Legislature condemns the terrorist attacks on Sikhs in

1 Afghanistan and calls for the protection of Sikhs, as a minority
2 religion, against further atrocities in Afghanistan.

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4 2. The Legislature urges the President of the United States and
5 the United States Secretary of State to protect the religious freedom
6 of the Sikh people in Afghanistan and take appropriate measures to
7 safeguard the human rights of the Sikh people.

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9 3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
10 shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of
11 the General Assembly to the President of the United States, the
12 United States Secretary of State, the Governor of New Jersey, and
13 to each member of Congress elected from this State.

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16 STATEMENT

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18 This resolution condemns the terrorist attacks on Sikhs in
19 Afghanistan and supports the religious freedom of the Sikh people.

20 Afghanistan, a predominantly Muslim country, was home to as
21 many as 250,000 Sikhs before a devastating civil war in the 1990s
22 drove out many of the Sikh people. Although the Afghanistan
23 constitution allows citizens to follow any religion, Sikhs have
24 continued to suffer discrimination and violence and are now
25 estimated to have less than 1,500 Sikh people remaining in the
26 country. Many of the most violent acts committed against the Sikh
27 people in Afghanistan have been perpetrated by extremist groups,
28 such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as the Islamic
29 State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). On July 1, 2018, a suicide
30 bomber targeted Sikhs in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, killing at least 19
31 Sikhs. A recent attack on a Sikh temple in Kabul, Afghanistan
32 committed on March 24, 2020 by ISIL gunmen and suicide bombers
33 killed 25 Sikh worshippers. These ongoing attacks and threats to
34 the Sikh people underline the need for a united global fight against
35 all forms of international terrorism and accountability for all entities
36 that support or conduct terrorism.

37 The United States has held religious freedom as a central tenet to
38 the country's beliefs. On September 23, 2019, during a meeting on
39 religious freedom at the United Nations Headquarters, the President
40 of the United States of America, the Vice President, and the
41 Secretary of State decried the atrocities committed against Sikhs in
42 different parts of the world and called for the protection of religious
43 freedom worldwide. Human rights and social justice are
44 cornerstones of the Sikh belief. New Jersey houses one of the
45 largest concentrations of Sikh Americans in the country, with about
46 100,000 Sikh Americans living in the State. In New Jersey, the
47 Sikh community has made numerous positive cultural, social,
48 economic, and political contributions, including holding public

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1 office and promoting peace and love. The New Jersey Legislature
2 should condemn these heinous acts of violence, which constitute an
3 affront to American values of tolerance and freedom.