

## **INDIASPORA PRESS RELEASE**

### **Diwali Stamp Issued by U.S. Postal Service**

#### **15-year Effort Results in Stamp's Release**

August 23, 2016

Happy Diwali 2016! The [United States Postal Service](#) (USPS) has [announced](#) the official release of a postage stamp commemorating the important Hindu, Jain and Sikh festival of Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights. [Rep. Carolyn Maloney](#) (D-NY), a respected leader in the cause, held a celebratory event on this momentous occasion and [credited](#) Indiaspora, among select others, for having fructified the Indian-American community's vision of having a Diwali Stamp in America.

This is the successful culmination of a long-sought goal of the Indian-American community, behind which [Indiaspora](#) and many other people and organizations put in unyielding and resolute effort. Indiaspora sincerely thanks the huge army of volunteers who in the best traditions of American democracy, made this day a reality!

"Indiaspora lauds Rep. Maloney for introducing House Resolutions in Congresses to urge USPS to release the Diwali Stamp. Her efforts played an important role in the eventual achievement of this cherished objective of the Indian-American community" said Indiaspora Founder MR Rangaswami.

Added Mr. Rangaswami, "This also shows the maturation of the Indian-American community that is now three million strong! We have come of age and are getting more engaged in community issues and also becoming more politically active."

[Rep. Ami Bera](#) (D-CA) chimed in enthusiastically, "I am thrilled that the United States Postal Service has issued a stamp to celebrate Diwali. As Co-chair of the India Caucus in the House of Representatives and the only Indian-American currently serving in Congress, I am proud of all that our community has accomplished. Nearly a billion people around the world celebrate this Festival of Lights, including two million right here in the U.S., and this stamp represents the hard work and achievements of all Indian-Americans."

Indiaspora also thanks Dr. Shailendra Kumar, an Indian-American physician based in Maryland, for initiating this enduring cause in 2001. In 2007, the Indian-American community cheered when the US Congress officially recognized Diwali's significance, and in 2009, President Barack Obama lit the symbolic *Diya*, or Diwali Lamp, at the White House. In 2013, activists Ravi and Ranju Batra gathered over 400,000 online signatures calling for the stamp.

In 2014, when community leaders approached Indiaspora, we made a commitment to making the Diwali stamp a reality. In 2015, Senate India Caucus co-chairs Sens. [Mark Warner](#) (D-VA) and [John Cornyn](#) (R-TX) introduced [Senate Resolution 113](#), calling for a Diwali Stamp in the U.S.

Indiaspora's community engagement resulted in over 10,000 letters and postcards being mailed to the USPS urging them to create and release a Diwali Stamp. Indiaspora also launched an online campaign via [www.diwalistamp.com](http://www.diwalistamp.com), encouraging Indian-Americans to call and write their elected officials on this subject. Indiaspora's [blog](#), social media and newsletters kept up the drumbeat.

Also in 2015, in conjunction with our partners at the [Hindu American Foundation](#) (HAF), Indiaspora volunteers walked the halls of Congress, meeting with elected officials and staff members at several hundred congressional offices, and convinced dozens of them to sign on to the congressional resolutions supporting the Diwali Stamp.

In conjunction with HAF and other organizations, Indiaspora also hosted a huge [Diwali celebration](#) in 2015 at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, where more than 50 Senators and Congressmen mingled with over 1,200 influential Indian-Americans.

Towards the end of 2015, Indiaspora and HAF sent a [community letter](#) signed by over 100 organizations to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee urging them to approve a Diwali Stamp.

"This year, Diwali came early!" concluded MR Rangaswami.

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**ABOUT INDIASPORA:** Indiaspora acts as a catalyst to transform the success of Indian Americans into meaningful impact in India and on the global stage. By sharing insight, hosting events and connecting people, Indiaspora aims to unite the professionally, geographically and religiously diverse Indian American community toward collective action. Indiaspora is committed to supporting the Indian American community on all levels.

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