

This resolution was brought to my attention a couple of days ago.

We agree with the India Association of Minnesota (IAM) and strongly affirm the values and respect for the rule of law, freedom of religion, protection of minority and indigenous groups from violent acts on people and property and the need to protect and uphold the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitutions of India and the United States.

We request you to follow due process by asking Asian Indians and the City residents in general for their input and views on this resolution. Until such input of the governed is obtained, it is advisable that the City Councils of Minneapolis and Saint Paul and the Mayors of Saint Paul and Minneapolis postpone consideration of the resolution.

Prinesh Patel

India Association of Minnesota

Respected Council Members,

We agree with the India Association of Minnesota (IAM) and strongly affirm the values and respect for the rule of law, freedom of religion, protection of minority and indigenous groups from violent acts on people and property and the need to protect and uphold the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitutions of India and the United States.

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Sincerely Yours,

Gupthan Namboodiripad

15622 Cobblestone Lake Parkway,

Apple Valley, MN 55124

Dear Councilmember,

My name is ___Ibrahim Khan___. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a

major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

In homes across St. Paul, South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and effect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

Thank you,

Dear Councilmember,

My name is Syed Yaseen. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Thank you,
Syed Yaseen

Dear Councilmember,

My name is Azeez Abdul. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Thank you,

Thanks,
Azeez

Dear Councilmember,

My name is Ammarah Hafeez. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in

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Thank you,

Ammarah

Dear Council Members,

My name is Niyaz Ahamed I am an active community member in the city of Eden Prairie since 1997. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Thank you,

Niyaz Ahamed

Dear Councilmember,

My name is Humera Mujir. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Thank you,
Humera Mujir

Dear Councilmember,

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entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

Thank you,

5/5/2020

Shameem Khan

Dear Council Members

I write to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th.

In addition to being a resident of the Twin Cities and an American citizen, I am a Professor in the History Department at the University of Minnesota. I specialize in 19th and 20th c. Indian history, and regularly teach courses on Hinduism, as also on Hindu nationalism. (In fact, I have just finished teaching a course on the latter this Spring).

On the basis of my knowledge of South Asian history, I am willing to vouchsafe for the factual correctness of the assertions made in the resolution about the violent discrimination faced by Muslims in India today, and about how the CAA and the NRC will work together to make Muslims into second class citizens in India.

The BJP and its sister organizations (some of which, such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, are active also in the United States) can without inaccuracy be described as subscribing to a Hindu supremacist ideology. Just like white supremacists in the United States often make Christianity into an exclusionary ethnic and cultural identity, the BJP and its sister organizations degrade the rich and complex traditions of Hinduism by propagating in its name an exclusionary cultural identity. This identity authorizes violence against not only other communities, but against Hindus who dissent. And unfortunately, Hindu supremacism is even more widespread in India than white supremacism is in the United States today. This ideology is so commonsensical and naturalized by now that many Hindu supremacists do not even think of themselves as supremacists. (An analogous situation prevailed, it is worth remembering, with white supremacists in pre-Civil Rights United States).

In view of all this, I believe that those of us who believe in the equal rights of all citizens regardless of their religion or ethnicity, who believe in freedom of religion or protection for minorities against persecution and racism, must oppose the BJP's agenda in the clearest possible manner. This is what the Council has chosen to do through this resolution, and I admire the Council for its commitment to democratic values.

I also request you to not heed the call from some misinformed sections of the Indian community to study the matter more closely before passing the resolution. At this point, I believe the above facts are clear enough to need no further investigation, and I urge you to without delay pass resolution 20-712.

In case you are looking for further information from outside sources, here are three in-depth articles that you may find helpful

1. Dexter Filkins, [“Blood and soil in Narendra Modi’s India,”](#) New Yorker, December 9, 2019. *This profile of the fearless young journalist Rana Ayyub provides also a good account of the broader politics in contemporary India.*
2. Soumya Shankar, [“India’s citizenship law, in tandem with national registry, could make BJP’s discriminatory targeting of Muslims easier,”](#) *The Intercept*, January 30, 2020. *For those who have little prior background, this article is very helpful for understanding how CAA and NRC is discriminatory.*
3. Ritika Jain, [“How India’s government set off a spiral of Islamophobia,”](#) *Article 14*. *This website was set up by some of India’s most respected public intellectuals in defense of the Indian constitution’s Article 14 (which declares: “The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.”). The article looks at how COVID 19 has served as an occasion for discriminatory practices against Muslims.*

Please do feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or questions. I will be glad to provide you with more information and analysis.

Best wishes

Ajay Skaria

From: samacharmn <samacharmn@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 3:41 PM
To: Thao, Dai (CI-StPaul) <dai.thao@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: India Resolution before Council

CM Thao - I noticed you signed on to the resolution. Not sure how much you know about the issue - hence this note.

There are extremists on both sides of the issue and so you should not pander to either one. Both groups are very active here in MN.

What you should be celebrating is the rich history of religious tolerance in India.

The birthplace of major religions of the world - Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and where other religions flourished, Christianity with St. Thomas, Jews, Parsis and Islam.

The intent of the Constitution of India to uphold and protect fundamental rights of all Indians and to define the country as a "secular" republic. Secular in India is used differently than here in the US - in India "all religions are celebrated" and not the "separation of church and state" here.

A simple resolution along these lines is sufficient to deliver the message. I suggest using the verbiage of the letter from the India Association of Minnesota (Note how that letter is crafted as they also are trying to navigate the extremists while holding to integrity).

The City of Saint Paul, strongly affirms the values and respect for the rule of law, freedom of religion, protection of minority and indigenous groups from violent acts on people and property and the need to protect and uphold the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitutions of India and the United States.

You might wish to add - To this end we support people and organizations in India and the United States working hard to protect and defend human rights and protect life and property of all residents of India and the United States against all forms of discrimination, bigotry and xenophobia.

If you adopt the existing resolution you will also have to defend what have you done for your Muslim constituents in Saint Paul. Why is it there an achievement gap in education and not a single fund for business or housing that is offered in an alternative finance models to build wealth in Saint Paul's Muslim communities. The support of the resolution as written will be very shallow in this context and wallows in hypocrisy. You will also have to explain due process.

You will also be supporting extremist on both sides who will come out of the woodwork and distract from a prime focus currently - navigating our city through this Covid Crisis. This article will give you a good background of what I am talking about.

<https://www.thehinducentre.com/the-arena/current-issues/article30789891.ece>

A broad affirmation of human rights in both countries is the best option at this time. I would not open it out to hearings - it will only bring the extremists out that will poison the well. The simple resolution above acknowledges and supports the core concept everyone wants.

Thanks for your leadership.
Samachar

Dear Councilmember,

My name is Siddhant Pusdekar. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. This is in-line with the overarching agenda of the ruling party and its anti muslim ideology. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring.

In homes across St. Paul, South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That

the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and affect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

Thank you,
Siddhant

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you
Shahed Baig
1130 Town Centre Dr, 7
Eagan MN 55123

Hello- As a constitute of Ward 4 of St.Paul of Indian descent, I would request a vote against RES-712. Not that I think the Indian Government doesn't deserve condemnation, but this becomes a wedge issue between communities. Certainly many in the Indian community will feel embittered, especially if other nations with equally bad governments are not singled out. It's better to look for ways to unite people, than divide - especially locally - since I don't think BJP would even care.

Guptan Nambudiripad

Dear Councilmember,

My name is ___Ibrahim khan____. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Thank you,

Dear Councilmember Jalali Nelson,

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The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect over 200 million people in India. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Sincerely,

Mustafa Diriye
565 Aldine St Apt 32
Saint Paul, MN 55104

Dear Councilmember Jalali Nelson,

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Sincerely,

Richa Nagar
2310 Valentine Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55108

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Sincerely,

David Faust
2310 Valentine Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55108

Hello:

As an Indian American, I have watched with shock and disbelief at the deterioration of the human rights situation in India over the last few years. It has reached a stage where the US Commission on International Religious Freedom in its recent report put India on the 'countries of particular concern' list.

I strongly support Resolution 20-712 and applaud the St Paul City Council on taking up this resolution and hope that it takes a firm stand against human right violations in India.

Sincerely
Nasir Mohammed

Please pAss the resolution India is on the parh to fascism need to put full stop by the sane people

Please vote yes

Ibrahim Mujir



May 5, 2020

To Members of the Saint Paul City Council,

I write in support of the resolution under consideration:

A RESOLUTION reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste by rejecting the Bharatiya Janata Party's Islamophobic ideology, and opposing India's National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act.

Following World War II, the United Nations passed several important conventions to address the global devastation that had caused an incalculable loss of life. The first was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which affirmed essential rights that every person deserves simply because of being human. This was the first time that such a document had ever been created, and it came as a response to the dehumanization and attempted extermination of all of Europe's Jews.

After affirming the rights inherent to every person, the UN then addressed the aftermath of the destruction: the millions of refugees and stateless people. Three more conventions were passed from 1951 to 1961, establishing the framework to provide safety for refugees and to eliminate statelessness, the condition in which a person is a citizen nowhere on earth.

Statelessness continues to be a horrific problem affecting millions of people around the world today, including in the United States. The UN has a goal to end statelessness by 2024.

The resolution above addresses the current situation in India by which more people will become stateless, citizens nowhere, with no nationality, no country protecting them, no place for safety.

In 1935 the German government stripped all Jews of their citizenship, rendering them stateless. They sought refuge but the doors of virtually every country on the planet slammed shut. We know the outcome; 6 million Jews were murdered because they had nowhere to go.

As the great philosopher Hannah Arendt, who was made stateless in Germany, once said, "Without a nationality, you have no right to have rights." I urge your support for this resolution – to take a stand against actions that are rendering people stateless, taking away their right to have rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen J. Kennedy".

Ellen J. Kennedy, Ph.D.

Adjunct Professor of Law and Executive Director

Dear Councilmember,

My name is Nazima Firdose. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Thank you,
Nazima

Hello,

I support City of St. Paul's resolution 20-712 which will be voted on tomorrow on May 6th. I as a Muslim will not tolerate the racist, discriminatory, Nazi inspired motives of India's government and RSS goons running wild with genocidal intents. I am thankful to city of St. Paul for bringing forth this much needed action and I want it to pass for the sake of humanity. This is not the end. I would like all law makers in

this country to be vigilant and monitor hateful speech not just from the dominating ethnicity but I have heard and seen accounts of many Indian Americans who have expressed their support of India's government for crimes against Muslim minorities. There are many Indian Americans who express their ghastly opinions towards Muslims. This is not the American way. We are living in a time when humanity is being tested against a common unseen enemy and still the racist, hindu supremacist, genocidal government of India and her supporters world-over are pushing for their anti-Muslim agendas. It is time to send a clear message to supporters of India's ruling BJP supporter in USA that this is not tolerated in America.

God bless.

Esteemed St. Paul City Council members:

I am happy to know that on May 6th, 2020, the City Council of St Paul's will approve a resolution expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community and standing up against dangerous exclusionary laws targeting religious minorities in India that have created instability, which threatens St Paul's business and residents and is abhorrent to all citizens who love human and religious rights.

Respectfully,
Rebecca Cramer

3148 29th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55406

As a Muslim American, and concerned citizen, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the Council members to approve this resolution. I'm quite concerned, as are many in my community, of anti-Muslim ignorance sentiment spreading.

Kristin Dieng

Plymouth, MN 55441

Dear City Council Members

Thank you for considering a resolution focusing on expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community and standing up against dangerous exclusionary laws targeting religious minorities in India that have created instability, which threatens St Paul's business and residents.

There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count.

We appreciate your support immensely.

Nausheena Hussain,
Executive Director
1007 West Broadway Ave N
Minneapolis, MN 55411

I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count.

The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect over 200 million people in India. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Sagirah Shahid
(She/Her)
Relationship Architect
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE)
1007 West Broadway Ave N
Minneapolis, MN 55411

Please pass this Resolution. We believe in equal rights for all the citizens of India

Dear Councilmember,

My name is Ajmal Nasar. I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

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Thank you,
Ajmal Nasar
4670 Aspen Ridge Cir
Eagan, MM 55122

We strongly oppose the resolution because none of its sponsors represent our community. Besides the resolution is guided by Hindu-phobia and ignorance of the law passed by the Indian Government. Citizenship Amendment Act was passed with a 79.5% majority in the lower house (Lok Sabha) and 55%

in the upper house (Rajya Sabha) though the ruling party has a mere 54% and 35% presence in these houses respectively showing a broad-based support in the political spectrum for CAA. Since then the President of India has agreed with it and signed. The Supreme Court has twice refused to stay its implementation. CAA has nothing to do with caste. It does not exclude the Muslims seeking citizenship but merely expedites granting citizenship to six non-Muslim religious minorities (Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Buddhist, Christians and Zoroastrian) of the 3 Islamic theocratic states (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh) due to their ongoing ethnic genocide. The council should instead condemn that genocide in those three nations but not this CAA which is an act of compassion for the religious minorities who are being brutally persecuted!

Drs. Kumud & Shashikant Sane

Hello dear city council members. I hope all is well with you. My name is Adahn Richie. I am emailing you in support of Caire's efforts to combat the human rights violations happening in India.

Right now as minnesotans we are experiencing the feeling of vulnerability with this covid-19. We have become so much more aware of health and mortality. That same feeling of vulnerability is what the oppressed Muslims in India have been experiencing. Perhaps by helping them we indeed are helping our selves. I believe that helping a brother in humanity during their time of difficulty guarantees relief of our own. Please I implore you to do what ever is in your power to help the oppressed. Stay healthy and be safe. Thank you

Dear City Council Members in St. Paul,

I am an active community member in the city of Inver Grove Heights and work as a cardiologist at United Hospital in ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count.

The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect over 200 million people in India. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

In homes across St. Paul, South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and effect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

If we permit injustice to anyone, we permit injustice to EVERYONE. We are all in this together. This inhumane treatment of the Hindu BJP of Muslims in India must be condemned an stopped. Please support this resolution.

Respectfully,

Bilal Murad, MD
Director of Interventional Cardiology,
United Hospital, St. Paul

I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count.

The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

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happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

In homes across St. Paul, South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and effect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

Thanks
Faiz Khan
16456 Holbrook Ave
Lakeville MN 55044

Dear chairman of St. Paul city Council,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the Council members to approve this resolution.

Regards

Mohamed Idris
--
Thanks,

Mohamed Idris

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the Council members to approve this resolution. Thank you.

Najam Saeed

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you!!

Musarrat Saeed

I support this resolution RES 20-712 and urge the Council members to approve this resolution.

Tanveer Zubair

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you

Shahid Mian

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution. Thank you.

Anwer Kalim

Dear Council member(s),

I write this to support the resolution **Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community**, opposing India's National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act, **regardless of their religion and caste**.

The CAA discriminates by omission against those practicing the religion of Islam: the act identifies several South Asian religious sects originating from three countries—Pakistan Afghanistan and Bangladesh--as eligible for Indian citizenship, but omits reference to all Muslim sects from these countries even if they are persecuted minorities in these three nations. This **violates the spirit of the constitution of India**, a **secular** democratic republic.

As a resident of the Twin Cities for over the last two decades, I appreciate the St Paul City Council's efforts to stand with its progressive residents of Indian origin, who are opposing the Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) in solidarity with multitudes of Indians living in India, all who see CAA as violating Indian constitution that guarantees equal treatment of all religions.

National Registry of Citizens (NRC), can end up depriving many more Indians of their right to be recognized as Indian citizens, given that it does not accept even a passport as adequate proof of citizenship. NRC would require individuals to present evidence to prove their and their parents birth in India, and in a country such as India where birth certificates have become more of a norm only in recent decades, such documentary evidence is beyond the means of many communities including Dalits (lower castes), adivasis (indigenous tribes) and other poor people irrespective of their religion.

However, NRC in combination with the CAA, would allow Indian state to grant citizenship to those willing to claim to hail from the three aforesaid-nations, as long as they do not belong to Muslim communities. Thus **NRC in combination with CAA** becomes a Sophocles' sword hanging over all Indian Muslims. Also, **NRC by itself is a threat to all poor people without documentary evidence** since the detention camps being built are envisaged as their future homes. I speculate that this is especially convenient to help remove poor communities from their ancestral lands.

Apologies for this long letter of support, but I want you to understand what is at stake here.

At stake are: future of Indian poor; future of Indian Muslims, and future of India as a secular republic.

Thank you for standing in solidarity with us,

Best wishes,

Shiney V

PS: Please do not hesitate to contact me if you want more information.

Also Please note the edit I have made to the title of the resolution.

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you,

Zainab Tabassum

I support this resolution RES 20-712 and urge the Council members to approve this resolution

Thank you

Rukhsana Ghouse

Dear St. Paul City Council Members,

My name is Zafar Siddiqui. I work in St. Paul. I am an Indian American and a Minnesota resident for past three decades.

I am reaching out to you to request you to kindly **support** RES 20-712 that is scheduled to be voted on May 6, 2020.

Soon after India won its independence, Gandhi was killed by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist

affiliated with the group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). It was a tragedy that deprived a newly independent country of a needed moral compass at its most vulnerable point. The RSS was banned in the aftermath of Gandhi's killing in January 1948.

Fast forward 70 years, and India looks more like Godse's than Gandhi's.

The BJP, a political offshoot of the RSS, is in power. Current prime minister Narendra Modi is an RSS member and its former regional parcharak (director). Modi, along with his coterie of RSS affiliated colleagues, has seen to it that Gandhi's dream of a peaceful and nonviolent India is decimated beyond repair.

It is important to remember that the current Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, was considered a *persona non grata* by the United States and was denied entry into the country in 2005 on the grounds of a religious freedom violation under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the first and only time such a denial has been issued. This ban lasted until he was elected as India's Prime Minister in 2014.

Rabid nationalism, coupled with unbridled hate against minorities and an unquestioning and fawning media, has reduced India to a shadow of its glorious, tolerant past when giants like Gandhi walked on its hallowed land. The discriminatory citizenship laws that India enacted threaten the minorities and especially the 200 million Indian Muslims. The RES 20-712 captures these concerns excellently well.

The ongoing lynching, killing, and relentless harassment of Muslims in India even during this pandemic resulted in the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to issue a scathing 2020 annual report. It recommended that the U.S. government designate India as a "country of particular concern", or CPC, for engaging in egregious religious freedom violations, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). It also recommended imposition of targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States.

The US and India have a great role to play in furthering democratic ideals in the world. The cornerstone of democracy is invariably rooted in how well a democratic country ensures the safety and security of minorities and an equal opportunity for all at the economic table - not just on paper but in practice as well.

Your support for resolution RES 20-712 will go a long way in helping improve the relationship between our country and India as champions of democracy in the world.

Best Regards
Zafar Siddiqui

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution. Thank you.

Thanks,
Abdulla

Honorable Council Members Jane L. Prince, Dai Thao and Nelsie Yang.

My name is Arun Bhargava. I oppose RES 20-712. It is neither based upon facts nor represents the opinion of majority Indian community. Not even a single Muslim or Indian of any religion has lost Indian citizenship due to passing CAA by Indian Govt. It is humanitarian act giving relief of dignity of citizenship to oppressed religious minorities of three neighboring nations created out of Indian land by British in 1947, by reducing waiting period in receiving citizenship to 7 years from 11 years for those religiously oppressed minorities who came to India before 2014. I request you to do some fact check about the condition of religious minorities in the three nations of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh and how their numbers have dwindled over the years due to killing and oppression. Even in this epidemic of Corona Virus pandemic Pakistani govt, refused food rations to these minority communities. CAA law does not stop people of Muslim faith to apply and get citizenship of India. NPR is about collecting information about who is living in the country by Govt of India, we have such census in USA also. NRC is a concept of National Registry of citizens just like we have Social Security number assigned to citizens in America. NRC process is not even proposed by Indian govt so far. It is being used by opposition parties in India to create fear mongering in Muslim community for vote bank politics.

India is largest democratic sovereign nation with its own checks and balances, and have many challenges. I oppose passing resolution and interfering in internal politics of a friendly democratic nation without knowing and researching and deliberating facts, based upon paranoia being created by few people who do not represent Indian community and do not know facts or are deliberately twisting them.

Thanks,

Arun Bhargava

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Dear St. Paul City Council Members,

My name is Mirz Aleem. I am a resident of St. Paul. I am an Indian American and a Minnesota resident for more than two decades.

I am reaching out to you to request you to kindly support RES 20-712 that is scheduled to be voted on May 6, 2020.

Soon after India won its independence, Gandhi was killed by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist affiliated with the group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). It was a tragedy that deprived a newly independent country of a needed moral compass at its most vulnerable point. The RSS was banned in the aftermath of Gandhi's killing in January 1948.

Fast forward 70 years, and India looks more like Godse's than Gandhi's.

The BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), a political wing of the RSS, is in power. The current prime minister Narendra Modi is an RSS member and its former regional pracharak (director). Modi, along with his coterie of RSS affiliated colleagues, has seen to it that Gandhi's dream of a peaceful and nonviolent India is decimated beyond repair.

It is important to remember that the current Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, was considered a persona non grata by the United States and was denied entry into the country in 2005 on the grounds of a religious freedom violation under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the first and only time such a denial has been issued. He was the then Chief minister of Gujarat state, where nearly 2000 muslims men , women and children (including unborn children in their mothers wombs) were killed or burnt alive. This ban lasted until he was elected as India's Prime Minister in 2014.

Rabid nationalism, coupled with unbridled hate against minorities and an unquestioning and fawning media, has reduced India to a shadow of its glorious, tolerant past when giants like Gandhi walked on its hallowed land. The discriminatory citizenship laws that India enacted threaten the minorities and especially the 200 million Indian Muslims.

The ongoing lynching, killing, and relentless harassment of Muslims in India even during this pandemic resulted in the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to issue a scathing 2020 annual report. It recommended that the U.S. government designate India as a "country of particular concern", or CPC, for engaging in egregious religious freedom violations, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). It also recommended imposition of targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States.

The US and India have a great role to play in furthering democratic ideals in the world. The cornerstone of democracy is invariably rooted in how well a democratic country ensures the safety and security of minorities and an equal opportunity for all at the economic table - not just on paper but in practice as well.

Your support for resolution RES 20-712 will go a long way in helping improve the relationship between our country and India as champions of democracy in the world.

Kind Regards

Mirz

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you
Shahed Baig
[1130 Town Centre Dr, 7](#)
[Eagan MN 55123](#)

From: Vishal Agarwal <vishalsagarwal@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 5:54 PM
To: Thao, Dai (CI-StPaul) <dai.thao@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Re: Proposed RES 20-712

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Forgot to attach the copy of CAA. Note that the National Register of Citizens is not in existence. So I am not sure what this Resolution is opposing. Also, the NRC in Assam was done per the orders of the Supreme Court of India based on the petitions filed when Congress was in power. The BJP actually opposed it and asked for more time. Due to the ill advised order, almost 4 million people could not be verified as citizens. There is no religion break up of who was left out and it is blatantly false to say that that included 2 million Muslims; and then to falsely blame the current government of India led by the BJP. In short, the RES 20-172 gets even elementary facts wrong and makes a mockery of the high intellectual traditions of Saint Paul.

Vishal Agarwal

On Tuesday, May 5, 2020, 05:49:49 PM CDT, Vishal Agarwal <vishalsagarwal@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Representative Dai Thao,

I serve on the board of several local and national level Hindu organizations in the United States and am writing to you in my personal capacity to oppose the ill-advised resolution.

The Citizenship Amendment Act, of which I am attaching a copy, has nothing whatsoever to do with the citizens of India. It deals with the victims of religious oppression in three countries in India's neighborhood that are Islamic theocratic states. In Pakistan, the percentage of non-Muslims has fallen from 23% to 3.6 between 1941 and 2017. In Bangladesh, Hindus fell from 28% to 9.5% in the same period. In Afghanistan, non Muslims numbered 200K as recently as 1980. Today, there are barely

1000. The reasons are obvious - state sponsored discrimination and persecution of non Muslims in these countries due to their national laws and mass people attitudes. In India, Muslims rose from 13.4% in 1941 to 14.3% in 2011 (after a dip due to riots in 1947 in the intervening decades). The numbers speak for themselves

Looking at their ongoing genocide of non Muslims in these theocratic Islamic states, the Government of India gave expedited citizenship (5 years) options to refugees from there. Even Muslim refugees from these 3 countries can avail Indian citizenship within the current 11 years of domicile. I am not sure how people believe that the CAA affects Indian Muslims, when it does not. They should rather fight against the oppression of non Muslims in theocratic states; or even against the daily killing of Ahmadies and Shias in these three Sunni dominated countries. If at all, CAIR and other Muslim organizations want to inject divisive overseas politics into Saint Paul, should they not also question Middle Eastern countries where non Muslims cannot even construct Churches, Temples and Synagogues openly.

The resolution is therefore guided by hateful divisive politics and also by religious hatred. It will annoy a large section of the Hindu community of our state and will not achieve any constructive purpose whatsoever. If minorities of the secular republic of India deserve equality, so too the non Muslim minorities of Islamic countries. That is what the CAA takes care of.

It is ironical that the hatefueled resolution gives names of cities of India where all the government did was to stop and arrest Muslim rioters damaging public property and attacking innocent bystanders or policemen. The arrests were made with the due process of law and the law will take its own course. The CAA itself was passed democratically with overwhelming majority in both houses of the Indian legislature/executive, it was signed by the President of India. Hundreds of lawmakers who do not belong to the BJP approved the passage of the bill.

Therefore your Resolution is not only divisive, it is simply unprofessional and contrary to objective facts.

With regards,

Vishal Agarwal

AS PASSED BY LOK SABHA ON 10.12.2019

Bill No. 370-C of 2019

THE CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

A BILL further to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventieth Year of the Republic of India as follows:

Short title and commencement

1. (1) This Act may be called the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Amendment of section 2.

2. In the Citizenship Act, 1955 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act), in section 2, in sub-section (1), in clause (b), the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:—

"Provided that any person belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian community from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, who entered into India on or before the 31st day of December, 2014 and who has been exempted by the Central Government by or under clause (c) of sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 or from the application of the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 or any rule or order made thereunder, shall not be treated as illegal migrant for the purposes of this Act;"

Insertion of new section 6B

3. After section 6A of the principal Act, the following section shall be inserted, namely:—

Special provisions as to citizenship of person covered by proviso to clause (b) of subsection

(1) of section 2.

'6B. (1) The Central Government or an authority specified by it in this behalf may, subject to such conditions, restrictions and manner as may be prescribed, on an application made in this behalf, grant a certificate of registration or certificate of naturalisation to a person referred to in the proviso to clause (b) of sub-section (1) of section 2.

(2) Subject to fulfilment of the conditions specified in section 5 or the qualifications for naturalisation under the provisions of the Third Schedule, a person granted the certificate of registration or certificate of naturalisation under sub-section (1) shall be deemed to be a citizen of India from the date of his entry into India.

(3) On and from the date of commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, any proceeding pending against a person under this section in respect of illegal migration or citizenship shall stand abated on conferment of citizenship to him:

Provided that such person shall not be disqualified for making application for citizenship under this section on the ground that the proceeding is pending against him

and the Central Government or authority specified by it in this behalf shall not reject his application on that ground if he is otherwise found qualified for grant of citizenship under this section:

Provided further that the person who makes the application for citizenship under this section shall not be deprived of his rights and privileges to which he was entitled on the date of receipt of his application on the ground of making such application.

(4) Nothing in this section shall apply to tribal area of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and the area covered under "The Inner Line" notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.'. *Reg. 5 of 1873*

Amendment of section 7D

4. In section 7D of the principal Act,—

(i) after clause (d), the following clause shall be inserted, namely:—

"(da) the Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder has violated any of the provisions of this Act or provisions of any other law for time being in force as may be specified by the Central Government in the notification published in the Official Gazette; or"

(ii) after clause (f), the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:—

"Provided that no order under this section shall be passed unless the Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard."

Amendment of section 18

5. In section 18 of the principal Act, in sub-section (2), after clause (ee), the following clause shall be inserted, namely:—

"(eei) the conditions, restrictions and manner for granting certificate of registration or certificate of naturalisation under sub-section (1) of section 6B;"

Amendment of Third Schedule

6. In the Third Schedule to the principal Act, in clause (d), the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:—

'Provided that for the person belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian community in Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, the aggregate period of residence or service of Government in India as required under this clause shall be read as "not less than five years" in place of "not less than eleven years".'

Dear Councilmember,

My name is Sajjad Ali . I am an active community member in the city of ST. Paul. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect millions. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India

will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

In homes across St. Paul, South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and effect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

Thank you,

Councilmember Dai - how are you? Here is what I posted on the public comment page and hope you will consider this alternative resolution as it brings both the United States and India to uphold fundamental rights and protections of minority and vulnerable groups. Thanks for considering it. bruce

Dear Councilmembers - please consider this alternative resolution as it provides support to those facing discrimination in both the United States and India and will support democratic voices in both countries. India and America have a long history of democratic participation, collaboration and friendship.

To protect all people in India and the United States from discrimination based on religion, race, caste, gender and other characteristics, we ask leaders of both countries to strongly affirm the values and respect for the rule of law and the freedom of religion, and to provide protection for minority, religious, indigenous and other vulnerable groups from violent acts on people and property, and to protect and uphold the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitutions of India and the United States.

In this alternative resolution, anyone being discriminated in the US or India, will find a voice of support and strength in the people of Saint Paul.



Bruce P. Corrie, PhD
Economist and Cultural Entrepreneur
www.empoweringstrategies.org
Tel: 612 321 8263
brucecorrie@gmail.com

Dear Respected Officials,

I STRONGLY OPPOSE RES 20-712. The voice of the "Customers" is the primary basis of a Democracy, yet, there was no communication to the Indian Community about this resolution being passed in St. Paul and Minneapolis. CAA is, in fact, a compassionate Law giving refuge, dignity and quite frankly, an opportunity to exist, to the minorities who are religiously persecuted in 3 Islamic neighboring countries of India. There is no intent or implication of CAA being Islamophobic. NRC is NOT even implemented in India. CAA was passed in both houses of the Indian Parliament by a democratically elected Government. The previous Government (led by Congress-I party) itself wanted to pass this resolution, and what the current BJP government has done is merely shown the resolve and grit to make it effective.

Warm regards,
Vallabha Tantry

Honorable Mr. Thao, Ms. Prince and Ms. Yang,

In strongest of terms I protest against the resolutions to condemn CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) passed in December 2019 by the Indian Parliament. I have following questions and comments:

- Before you or anyone propose(d) the resolution to condemn CAA, did you contact the twin-city (and around) community members of India at large (Hindus as majority; Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains and Buddhists as prominent minorities)?
- I have personally seen disinformation being disseminated irresponsibly in the twin-city area. For instance, 170-200 million Muslims of India stand to face trouble or citizenship questions. This is simply fear-mongering as CAA has nothing to do with any current Indian citizen.
- CAA is now a law passed by the Indian Parliament with votes from all parliamentarians as required, the votes from both majority and minority members of parliament being on both sides of the issue in a democratic way.
- It is and would be imprudent for any person with sense of responsibility to act in either way (support or oppose) of the resolution without having the full and accurate knowledge.

Thank you.

P.S. My details are given below in case you wish to contact me.

Best regards / Mejores saludos / Mit freundlichen Grüßen / Met vriendelijke groeten / Distinti saluti / 此致
敬意 / भवदीय,

Prabhat Tekriwal, Ph.D., MBA

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: the resolution concerning India in the City Councils of Saint Paul and Minneapolis,

I agree with the India Association of Minnesota (IAM) and strongly affirm the values and respect for the rule of law, freedom of religion, protection of minority and indigenous groups from violent acts on people and property and the need to protect and uphold the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitutions of India and the United States.

We request you to follow due process by asking Asian Indians and the City residents in general for their input and views on this resolution. Until such input of the governed is obtained, it is advisable that the City Councils of Minneapolis and Saint Paul and the Mayors of Saint Paul and Minneapolis postpone consideration of the resolution.

Thanks,

Sapna

Dear Mr. Dai Thao,

My name is Vijendra Agarwal, former Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Now I am retired and live in Inver Grove Heights. I am very active in the community and volunteer/lead a nonprofit (Vidya Gyan) aimed at the education and wellbeing of children because, "Every Child Matters." I spend about 3 months in India each year volunteering at the schools to uplift the underprovided children of all faiths. I returned from India in March and even followed the visit by President Trump who himself vouched that India is a thriving democracy with minority rights fully protected under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi.

I am writing to you not to support resolution 20-712 because it does not represent the facts and is simply a misguided effort resulting from Hinduphobia. The Citizenship Amendment Act is by no means designed to take away the citizenship of anyone under the law. All it does is expeditious processing of the citizenship of several minority groups including Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Zoroastrians who wish to seek Indian citizenship due to persecution and acts of genocide in their country of residence, namely Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Currently, India is home to about 200 million Muslims, the largest "minority" group, and have every right under the Constitution in the world's largest and sustained democracy. There is no human rights violation in India for any group.

I agree with India Association of Minnesota (IAM) and strongly affirm the values and respect for the rule of law, freedom of religion, protection of minority and indigenous groups from violent acts on people and property and the need to protect and uphold the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitutions of India and the United States.

We request you to follow the due process by asking Asian Indians and the City residents in general for their input and views on this resolution. Until such input of the governed is

obtained, it is advisable and only fair that the City Councils of Minneapolis and Saint Paul and the Mayors of Saint Paul and Minneapolis postpone consideration of the resolution.

Sincerely Yours,
Vijendra Agarwal, Ph.D.
11599 Aileron Ct.
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.

Mohammed N Ahmed

I am an active community member in the city of Woodbury MN. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count.

The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect over 200 million people in India. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

In homes across St. Paul, South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and effect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

Shoaib Naseem
8000 Drake Road
Woodbury MN 55125

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution. Thank you.

Best Regards
Abed Ahmed

Dear Council Members,

I support resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.
Halima Khan

Dear Members of the City Council;

I live in Minneapolis and am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Registry Count.

The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect over 200 million people in India. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

In homes across St. Paul and Minneapolis, South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and effect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open is St. Paul.

Thank you for standing up to justice. God bless.

Tahera Mamdani
Minneapolis MN 55432

Dear councilmember,

Please support resolution RES 20-712. We are extremely disturbed by the current conditions in India. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Irfan K Sandozi
2166 Lakebrook Dr
New Brighton, MN 55112

Dear madam/Sir,

I support the City of St. Paul's resolution 20-712 Condemning Human Rights Violations in India

Regards,

N S

Blaine MN

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution. Thank you.

Nausheen Ahmed

Dear St. Paul City Council Members,

My name is shameem Khan, I work in St. Paul. I am an Indian American and a Minnesota resident for past three decades.

I am reaching out to you to request you to kindly support RES 20-712 that is scheduled to be voted on May 6, 2020.

Soon after India won its independence, Gandhi was killed by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist affiliated with the group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). It was a tragedy that deprived a newly independent country of a needed moral compass at its most vulnerable point. The RSS was banned in the aftermath of Gandhi's killing in January 1948.

Fast forward 70 years, and India looks more like Godse's than Gandhi's.

The BJP, a political offshoot of the RSS, is in power. Current prime minister Narendra Modi is an RSS member and its former regional parcharak (director). Modi, along with his coterie of RSS affiliated

colleagues, has seen to it that Gandhi's dream of a peaceful and nonviolent India is decimated beyond repair.

It is important to remember that the current Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, was considered a persona non grata by the United States and was denied entry into the country in 2005 on the grounds of a religious freedom violation under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the first and only time such a denial has been issued. This ban lasted until he was elected as India's Prime Minister in 2014.

Rabid nationalism, coupled with unbridled hate against minorities and an unquestioning and fawning media, has reduced India to a shadow of its glorious, tolerant past when giants like Gandhi walked on its hallowed land. The discriminatory citizenship laws that India enacted threaten the minorities and especially the 200 million Indian Muslims.

The ongoing lynching, killing, and relentless harassment of Muslims in India even during this pandemic resulted in the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to issue a scathing 2020 annual report. It recommended that the U.S. government designate India as a "country of particular concern", or CPC, for engaging in egregious religious freedom violations, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). It also recommended imposition of targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States.

The US and India have a great role to play in furthering democratic ideals in the world. The cornerstone of democracy is invariably rooted in how well a democratic country ensures the safety and security of minorities and an equal opportunity for all at the economic table - not just on paper but in practice as well.

Your support for resolution RES 20-712 will go a long way in helping improve the relationship between our country and India as champions of democracy in the world.

Best Regards
Shameem Khan

Dear council members,

I support the resolution, and urge you to pass the resolution, in a bid to end the unconstitutional oppression of the minorities by the fascist BJP regime.

Thank you!!

Farah Shariff.

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution. Thank you.

Dee Shaik

Dear Council Member Tolbert:

Later today, I urge you as my council member (and your colleagues as well) to vote to support resolution 20-712.

Across the world, from Hungary to Turkey to India, we now see a tilt towards fear-based politics that is more nationalistic, more authoritarian, more sectarian, and often more racist and discriminatory and less inclusive. It is a politics based in fear, not hope. In hate, not love. I believe that for you, your fellow Council members and the vast majority of my fellow St. Paulites, that is not the sort of world we want to live in.

I also agree with the content of the resolution, and its factual basis. I know others who are literally world experts around these issues, who have written you in support of it as well.

Trite as it may sound, I think the adage of “Think globally, act locally” applies here. In part, that is why I deliberately sent my two daughters to St. Paul Public Schools, and later to the Friends School of MN, and to the Twin Cities German Immersion School, as those fine schools also think globally, and act locally, and teach our children to do the same.

When given an opportunity to speak out in public for democracy and religious tolerance, and in opposition to discrimination and intolerance, the time to do so is now and without delay. Further delay or “study” is neither wise, nor necessary.

Please vote to pass resolution 20-712. Our city will be the better for it.

Sincerely,

David Wallinga, MD
305 Brimhall Street
St. Paul, MN 55105

I support this resolution RES 20-712 and urge the Council members to approve this resolution

Thank you

Adeel Ahmed

Medina, MN

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution. Thank you. Dr, Nisar

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution. Thank you.

Shaik Ahmed

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.

Riaz Shad

Please support St. Paul's resolution 20-712 Condemning Human Rights Violations in India which will be voted May 6th.

The resolution focus on City's of St Paul's expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community and standing up against dangerous exclusionary laws targeting religious minorities in India that have created instability, which threatens St Paul's business and residents.

There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count.

Thank you,
Mona Meyer / President
CWA MN State Council
State Political/Legislative Coordinator
651-263-7358
3529 Lake St East
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Motika Anand

To the members of the Saint Paul City Council:

I write to you today in support of the resolution reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, as a city that supports its South Asian community, and as a city that rejects the anti-Muslim policies and practices of the Indian government.

I am a South Asian American, first generation, and I have lived in Saint Paul for nearly 14 years. I have chosen to make this city my home and the home of my three children, also of South Asian descent. My parents moved to this country in the 1970's from India and now reside in Minnesota.

The India my parents left was a welcoming one. It was one where people of different faiths could be together. Sometimes in harmony, sometimes in strife, but always part of the same nation. This is the way my grandfather and his contemporaries wanted it. My grandparents were freedom fighters who worked to free their homeland from the United Kingdom. My grandfather later went on to work for the first Indian government and was a diplomat representing the nation until the 1970's.

While my father grew up in a traditional Hindu home, the strongest relationships that he made and that still exist today are with Muslim and Sikh people who are also the children of diplomats and representatives of the government. While Hindu politics have dominated India's political system, particularly with the popularity of the BJP in the last 30 years, India's first government was represented by many faiths and embraced many faiths.

The current government of India has longed turned a blind eye to violence against Muslims. Their disregard for the lives of large portions of their population is only further solidified in the National Registry of Citizens and the Citizenship Amendment Act. India is consistently moving away from the nation my grandfather helped create.

It is important to me, my family, and my community that the city passes this resolution. This resolution is about naming that we openly oppose measures that persecute or create separate status for Muslim people across the world. It is about telling our Muslim community here in Minnesota that we support their ability to be free, not only here in our city, but across the world. It is about telling them that we believe their families and their communities across the world matter. It is about honoring the legacy of those who helped free their country and establish a government for the people, and not just honoring the Hindu people like my grandfather but the Muslims he marched next to and worked with all those years.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on this matter.

Avinash Viswanathan
94 Mounds Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55106

Hello,

I support this resolution RES 20-712 and urge the Council members to approve this resolution

--

Best Regards,
Muhammad Kashif

Honorable Council Members Jane L. Prince, Dai Thao and Nelsie Yang.

My name is Arun Bhargava. I oppose RES 20-712. It is neither based upon facts nor represents the opinion of majority Indian community. Not even a single Muslim or Indian of any religion has lost Indian citizenship due to passing CAA by Indian Govt. It is humanitarian act giving relief of dignity of citizenship to oppressed religious minorities of three neighboring nations created out of Indian land by British in 1947, by reducing waiting period in receiving citizenship to 7 years from 11 years for those religiously oppressed minorities who came to India before 2014. I request you to do some fact check about the condition of religious minorities in the three nations of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh and how their numbers have dwindled over the years due to killing and oppression. Even in this epidemic of Corona Virus pandemic Pakistani govt, refused food rations to these minority communities. CAA law does not stop people of Muslim faith to apply and get citizenship of India. NPR is about collecting information about who is living in the country by Govt of India, we have such census in USA also. NRC is a concept of National Registry of citizens just like we have Social Security number assigned to citizens in America. NRC process is not even proposed by Indian govt so far. It is being used by opposition parties in India to create fear mongering in Muslim community for vote bank politics.

India is largest democratic sovereign nation with its own checks and balances, and have many challenges. I oppose passing resolution and interfering in internal politics of a friendly democratic nation without knowing and researching and deliberating facts, based upon paranoia being created by few people who do not represent Indian community and do not know facts or are deliberately twisting them.

Thanks,

Arun Bhargava

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Resident of Twin Cities in MN

--

- *Mohammed Ikramur Rahman*

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution **RES 20-712** and urge the council members to approve this resolution today.

Thank you,

Ahmed.

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.

Viqar Ahmed

Dear Council Members,

I whole heartedly support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to please approve this resolution.

Thanks a lot,
Panna Batra Iyer

Dear Council Members, **I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.**

Thank you.
Shameem Niyaz

Dear Council members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve the resolution.

Thank you,
Ashar Haque

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.
Mohammad Q Imam
Apple Valley, MN

Dear Council Members,
I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.
Thank you

Regards,
Imdad Siddiqui

Dear Council Members:

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you,
Zack

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.
Mujeebuddin Mohammed

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.
Mohammed Gulam

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.

Wasim Muhammad

Dear Council Members, I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution

. Thank you.

khan hasan

seattle

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.

Mohammed Osman

I support this resolution RES 20-712 and urge the Council members to approve this resolution

Munzurul Islam
PO BOX 507
Rosemount MN 55068

Dear Honorable Jane L. Prince, Dai Thao and Nelsie Yang

We both strongly oppose the resolution. Its sponsors are NOT community members and it is NOT based upon the facts but instead based upon Hindu-Phobia.

The Citizenship Amendment Act was passed by a huge majority 79.5% vs 20.5% in the lower house of elected members (Lok-Sabha) and fairly wide margin 55% vs 45% in the upper house of appointed members (Rajya-Sabha).

This percentage is very impressive considering that the ruling party has the majority of 54% in the lower house and only 35% presence in the upper house. This indicates that the passage of this act has broad based support in the political spectrum throughout India.

This act does not preclude Muslims from applying for citizenship nor does it deny citizenship to Muslims who are already the citizen. This act simply makes easier for those oppressed individuals in the 3 Islamic theocratic states of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh where ethnic genocide is ongoing.

If the city council needs to pass any resolution it should be to condemn these acts of brutal persecution of the religious minorities in these nations.

Thank you for your leadership which stands for the truth and the organized propaganda.

With Best Wishes,

Kumud Sane, M.D.

Shashikant Sane, M.D.

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Name : Amair Ahmed

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you,
Shohab
St paul-MN

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you,
Shahid Abbas

Dear City Council Members,

I do not live in the city of St. Paul but I belong to the South Asian community in Eden Prairie and highly appreciative of the initiative of your city council leading the way address human right violations affecting the families of the residents. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across

your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count.

The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect over 200 million people in India. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

We, the community of South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and effect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

It is about American and International human rights values that do not allow victimization on the basis of faith or creating concentration camps by denying the right to citizenship. I hope other city councils will also follow your footsteps.

Thanking you and the residents of St. Paul,

Best regards,

Babar

(Zaheer Babar Khan)

Dear Council Members,

I support the resolution RES 20-712 and urge the council members to approve this resolution.

Thank you.

Mohamed h Musani

Respected Council Members,

My name is Biswajivan Dikshit , I have been living in MN with my family since 2008 and currently working as a Senior Manager Technology with Ameriprise Financial Inc. I have done my bachelors in Engineering from INDIA and perusing my MBA from St.Thomas University. I have followed the visit by President Trump to India closely who himself vouched that India is a thriving democracy with minority rights fully protected under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi.

I am writing to you not to support resolution 20-712 because it does not represent the facts and is simply a misguided effort resulting from Hinduphobia. The Citizenship Amendment Act is by no means designed to take away citizenship of anyone under the law. All it does is expeditious processing of the citizenship of several minority groups including Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Zoroastrians who wish to seek Indian citizenship due to persecution and acts of genocide in their country of residence, namely Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Currently, India is home to about 200 million Muslims, the largest “minority” group and have every right under the Constitution in the world’s largest and sustained democracy. There are no human rights violations in India for any group.

I agree with India Association of Minnesota (IAM) and strongly affirm the values and respect for the rule of law, freedom of religion, protection of minority and indigenous groups from violent acts on people and property and the need to protect and uphold the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitutions of India and the United States.

We request you to follow due process by asking Asian Indians and the City residents in general for their input and views on this resolution. Until such input of the governed is obtained, it is advisable and only fair that the City Councils of Minneapolis and Saint Paul and the Mayors of Saint Paul and Minneapolis postpone consideration of the resolution.

Sincerely Yours,
Biswajivan Dikshit
5225 Jewel Ln N
Plymouth , MN 55446

Dear Council Member,

I am writing to you to express my strong opposition to Resolution 20-712 and ask that it be tabled. In the event it is not tabled, I ask that you vote NO.

This resolution is deeply flawed, misguided, and divisive.

First, it is important that you understand that India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is being purposely misrepresented to advance a dangerous political agenda that seeks to harm America and her democratic ally India. Millions of Americans support India's effort to protect persecuted religious minorities and the Saint Paul City Council should too.

Here's why:

(1) Religious minorities in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, People's Republic of Bangladesh, and Islamic Republic of Pakistan have for decades faced horrific institutional, political, and social persecution, in some cases to the point of near demographic extinction.

(2) The CAA provides legal refugee status and a fast-track for naturalization to Afghan, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians (Parsis) who fled religious persecution and entered India on or before December 31, 2014. These religious minorities, some of whom are Pakistani Hindus from disadvantaged castes, fled to India because it is their only safe haven in the region.

(3) The CAA does not change citizenship or other immigration laws, nor does it impact the rights of India's 200 million Muslims, who enjoy all the freedoms that only secular democracies like India can offer their diverse citizenry.

You should also know that the U.S. has an almost identical law to India's CAA - the Lautenberg-Specter Amendment. In fact, our great state, with its rich history of welcoming immigrants and refugees, is home to some 12,500 beneficiaries of this very program that benefits Jews, Evangelical Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, and Ukrainian Orthodox Christians from states of the former Soviet Union. Persecuted Baha'i, Christians, and Jews from Iran, and Indochinese nationals are also included.

Second, the resolution is wrong on the claim that the National Registry of Citizens (NRC) will discriminate against LGBTQ people, atheists, Adivasis, Muslims, and low caste Hindus, and demonstrates the complete lack of knowledge and familiarity its authors have about India.

The Government of India has made clear that there is no plan for a national NRC. It has also assured that if and when any NRC is administered, no one will be excluded on the basis of religion, gender, or caste (the latter which exists in all faith communities in India, not just Hindu).

There is no basis to claim the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seeks to discriminate against LGBTQ people. In fact, the BJP led parliament passed the Transgender Protection of Rights Bill that went into effect this past January.

The inclusion of atheists is amusing at best and ignorant at worst. While atheists are persecuted, even beheaded, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, India's civilizational ethos of pluralism has given rise and space to various philosophical traditions of atheism.

The resolution states that it is reaffirming the city to be "a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community." The effect, however, is the opposite.

The Saint Paul City Council has single-handedly created fissures in our community by wading into a political arena it knows little about. It has created a hostile environment for people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities by perpetuating unverified information and harmful stereotypes about Hindus that they are now forced to dispel.

For these reasons, we urge the Saint Paul City Council to uphold their oath, demonstrate responsible governance, and table this non-germane, factually inaccurate, and deeply divisive resolution.

Regards,

Lexi

The Council received several hundred copies of the email below, mostly from writers outside of Minnesota.:

Dear Council President Brendmoen,

I am writing to you to express my strong opposition to Resolution 20-712 and ask that it be tabled. In the event it is not tabled, I ask that you vote NO.

This resolution is deeply flawed, misguided, and divisive.

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Here's why:

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From: Naiyer Usmani, St. Paul MN 5/8/2020

Dear Respected St. Paul Council members:

Amy Brendmoen
Mitra Jalali
Rebecca Noecker
Jane L. Prince
Dai Thao
Chris Tolbert
Nelsie Yang

RE: Please Support Resolution RES 20-712

I am a MN State employee, living in St. Paul. I am an American Citizen born in the State of Uttar Pradesh (UP), India. I have been living in the State of MN for the past 22 years.

I was in New Delhi this past December, when the CAA and NRC issues started. And because I have a lot of relatives in India, I have been following the problems that Muslims have been facing in India. It seems that Muslims are being blamed for anything negative that happens in India. For example, the Corona Virus is being blamed squarely on the Muslims, and a phrase Corona Jihad has been coined. Many other problems have been created for Muslims. They have been lynched, several beaten to death, at times while the police stand and watch. And at other times the police take part in the brutality. These are every day events. The Governor of the State of UP, known as the Chief Minister, has openly threatened Muslims. Can you imagine our Governor openly threatening about 20-30% of the Minnesota population? Other BJP (Party in charge) have openly said that they will turn the nation to a purely Hindu nation within a very short time. A majority of the Indian news media spews hate continuously against the Muslims. The surprising thing is that none of the BJP leaders - as high as the Prime Minister – are always silent. They actually condone this violence against the Muslims. At times when the damage has been done, the leaders do come and say a few nice words.

In reference to a pregnant innocent Muslim Activist in police custody, a former Supreme Court of India Chief Justice recently stated " ... is symbolic of the total collapse of democracy & state institutions in the country." (With respect to false accusations in the case of Ms. Safoora Zargar.)

In India, pogroms have become common. Muslim neighborhoods, including businesses, have been burned. In some cases, people that were alive, were burned to death. Some Hindus are telling (and enforcing) others not to buy vegetables from Muslim vendors. Muslims are not allowed to rent apartments in certain areas. Mosques have been demolished. In fact, my family was caught in the onslaught against the Muslims, when the BJP/RSS Party and their gangs demolished the Babri Mosque in 1992. (And the list goes on, and on.)

Please do support this Resolution, so India can turn around, and so people can try living in harmony. The India today is not recognizable.

Regards,

Naiyer Usmani

Greetings Distinguished City Council Members,

On behalf of the 22,000 members of the Minnesota Nurses Association, many who live and work in the city of St. Paul, I am reaching out to you today to ask for your support of resolution 20-712. This resolution, which will be up for a vote on May 6th, is an expression of solidarity with St. Paul's South Asian community and stands up against the exclusionary laws that target religious minorities in India. The Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count will effect over 200 million Muslims in India that could lose their citizenship. These dangerous exclusionary laws targeting religious minorities in India threaten St. Paul's businesses and residents.

The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect over 200 million people in India. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

Across the city of St. Paul, South Asian Muslims are witness to our current President's acceptance and approval of Prime Minister Modi's and BJP's racist policies. However, St. Paul is a city that welcomes everyone, regardless of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender identity, health status, lifestyle, national origin, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, or familial status. The nurses are asking for your support of resolution 20-712. Now is the time to stand up and show St. Paul's community that their city rejects this racist rhetoric and policies. Let's show the world that we are greater than fear and refuse to accept this.

Sincerely,

Shannon M. Cunningham
Director of Governmental and Community Relations
Minnesota Nurses Association

To whom it may concern,

I would like to vote YES on resolution RES 20-712. I have been concerned to this problem from January! Together we can do something to help. Thanks

Anjum Siddiqi

Dear Minneapolis/St. Paul City Council Members, The Hon. Amy Brendmoen, Jane Prince, Dai Thao, Nelsie Yang, Chris Tolbert, Mitra Jalali, Rebecca Noecker,

Sub: Support for Resolution 20–712 — which has been brought to the City Council by Council members Jane Prince, Dai Thao, Nelsie Yang: “Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul’s South Asian community regardless of religion and caste by rejecting the Bharatiya Janata Party’s Islamophobic ideology, and opposing India’s National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act.”

In 1940, Savarkar, the ideologue of Hindutva wrote these ominous words:

“The non-Hindu people of Hindustan must either adopt Hindu culture and languages, must learn and respect and hold in reverence the Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but of those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture ... in a word they must cease to be foreigners; or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizens' rights.”

“To keep up the purity of its race and culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic races—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by”.

The current administration in India has now embarked on implementing Savarkar’s chilling vision. In December 2019 the Parliament of India passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which blatantly discriminates against Muslims. The newly amended law allows the National Register of Citizens (NRC) to be updated based on religion so as to exclude Muslims. It violates India's international obligations to prevent deprivation of citizenship on the basis of race, color, descent, nation or ethnicity.

India has taken the first step towards preparation of a National Register of Citizens with the National Population Register (NPR). The NPR allows local bureaucrats to mark down as “doubtful” the citizenship of people who have lived in India for generations, sometimes for thousands of years. Anyone whose citizenship is so questioned must then produce papers to prove his/her citizenship. In a country where millions live on footpaths, tens of millions are migrant laborers, where most births take place at home and are not recorded, where hundreds

of millions live in poverty and squalor, such documentation simply does not exist. The migrant laborers, women, LBGTQ people and discriminated minorities are particularly vulnerable.

The Citizenship Amendment Act together with the National Register of Citizens and the National Population Register will create millions of stateless persons in India resulting in a massive tragedy in South Asia. It will create an unprecedented refugee crisis at a time when the United Nations is trying to contain the flood of refugees in the world.

Even before the first person has been declared a “foreigner” in states as far south as Karnataka, India is building “detention centers” (concentration camps) for the anticipated influx of non-citizens. Several are already operational in the state of Assam.

The experience of neighboring Myanmar confirms what can happen if India is not persuaded to desist from its current policies. Until 1938 Myanmar (Burma) was a part of British India. As the territories of modern-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma were under the British crown and shared a common central government, a large number of Bengalis migrated to the Rakhine state of Myanmar in search of a livelihood. When Myanmar was severed from British India, the Bengalis found themselves on the wrong side of the border. Decades later, the government of Myanmar declared these Bengalis to be “foreigners” and “non-citizens”. They were bundled together with native Burmese Muslims as “Rohingyas” paving the way for the Rohingya genocide of 2012-17.

The case of Assam in northeastern India supports our position. An application of NCR in that state has resulted in the declaration of 1.9 million people as “non-citizens”. The list includes Muslims, Hindus and Christians alike. The Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 provides the non-Muslims a path to citizenship, isolating the Muslims alone as “foreigners” tagged as Bangladeshis.

The situation in northeastern India is similar to that in the Rakhine state of Myanmar. The borders of the state of Bengal have shifted five times over the last century: 1906, 1911, 1938, 1947 and 1971. With each shift in the border, the hardworking Bengalis have found themselves on the “wrong” side of shifting borders. *Just as the changing borders led to a genocide of Rohingyas in Myanmar, the current policies of India point towards a massive tragedy in India, this time on a much larger scale.*

Violence against Muslims and other minorities in India has shown a sharp spike in recent years. The anti-Sikh riots of 1984, the razing of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and the anti-Muslim pogrom of 2002 in Gujarat are well recorded. Muslims and Dalits are lynched on mere rumors that they eat beef and the perpetrators go unpunished. The large-scale anti-Muslim pogrom of February 23-26, 2020 in Delhi killed 54 people and destroyed millions in property including mosques and historical tombs. Muslim men and boys were lynched and thrown into ditches. Muslim homes were singled out and targeted while the neighboring properties of non-Muslims were untouched even as the police looked on.

While anti-minority violence is not new, what is new since 2014 is that hate speech and hate crimes are officially condoned. For instance, the home minister of India has called the hapless Bengali migrants “termites”. The 2020 Delhi pogrom was incited by the hate speech of a member of the ruling party.

I appeal to you to pass Resolution 20–712.

Prof. Nazeer Ahmed

dna@delixus.com



A Concentration Camp in Goalpara, Assam, India. Courtesy: The Hindu (National Daily), India

Dear Ms. Amy Brendmoen, President, City Council and Team:

Thank you City Council members of St. Paul for your attention and time to the resolution 20-712. Special thanks to Ms. Jane Prince for your time to research the issues and moving the resolution. We are a link to the common human chain and have our responsibility to the common values. Based on the discussions in video recording of May 6, 2020 city council session and news media reporting on the Resolution 20-712, I am sending the rejoinder to my earlier email with some links to help in better understanding of the issue.

Addressing the concerns from respected council members regarding complexity of the issue, and role/scope of the City Council of St. Paul, please note:

1) The issue is not complex if you read the two acts (CAA and NRC) from the perspective of principles of human rights. CAA 2019 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizenship_\(Amendment\)_Act,_2019](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizenship_(Amendment)_Act,_2019)) clearly denies the same rights to Muslims coming to India vs. communities of other faiths.

Overall, it is a political bill and a diversion than addressing the real issues because people fleeing the countries mentioned specifically in the bill will prefer to go to Europe or United States than to India. India itself is struggling to address persecution of Dalits, Christians, and Muslims. It is on the rise with the current government of Prime Minister Modi supported by the extremist terrorist organization called RSS created on the basis of faith supremacy.

NRC (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Citizens) is no different than running detention camps and then deciding who should be considered legal. This is also considered as ethnic cleansing of Muslim population by declaring them "stateless". The intentions are being questioned and criticized by intellectuals, lawyers, and human rights activists from all different faiths and communities.

2) Since muslim immigrants from India are living in the City Council of St. Paul, they are concerned about these human rights violations; especially after the recent massacre and arson of properties in a poor neighborhood (mostly muslims) of Delhi <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/07/812193930/delhi-riots-aftermath-how-do-you-explain-such-violence>) led by RSS while facing no resistance from the law enforcing agencies deployed in the area. Indian muslims in particular and human rights supporters in general, are therefore asking at least a symbolic support from the respected members of the city council.

3) Human rights are border-less i.e. it is not an internal issue. It is a common platform of shared values that we as humans are required to support by raising our voices when vulnerable communities are subjected to racism threatening their life, property, and right to stay safe and live happily. In case there are business interests, city council need to review the relationship with the allies when it comes to human rights; latter should set the criteria as we are committed to American values towards human rights and International Charters.

I did read in the newspapers some concerns from Indian Association of Minnesota (IAM). It is a very respected organization and shares very rich cultural heritage with Minnesotans. I have a lot of respect for Ms. Shanti Shah. She is a very progressive voice and I am quite sure if she was in India, she would have been on the streets protesting against CAA and NRC.

IAM needs to make sure that they are inclusive towards Indian Muslims and their concerns otherwise they would be limited in their representation of the whole Indian community. All faiths (or no faiths) need their support when it comes to human rights. Supporting the voices resisting human rights violations is needed to bring a positive change and make India a better place for all faiths, and ethnicity.

Thanks,

Best regards,
Babar

(Zaheer Babar Khan)

On Wed, May 6, 2020 at 11:43 AM Zaheer Babar Khan <zbkhan@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear City Council Members,

I do not live in the city of St. Paul but I belong to the South Asian community in Eden Prairie and highly appreciate of the initiative of your city council leading the way address human right violations affecting the families of the residents. I am contacting you to ask you to support resolution 20-712 coming across your table for a vote on May 6th. There are over 200 million Muslims in India that are at risk of losing their citizenship because of the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry Count.

The nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome; and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty. Yet, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP are pushing xenophobic and Islamophobic policies that have the potential to affect over 200 million people in India. It is the duty of every democracy loving city in the United States and beyond to condemn these actions that are occurring. This issue is not one that is happening a world away, the instability caused by the escalating human right violations in India will have a major impact on business and economy of St. Paul as India is a significant trading and commerce partner.

We, the community of South Asian Muslims are watching as our president gives blanket approval of Modi's racist policies, and it is vital that the city council stands up and says no. That the city council must show the Indian government that the world is watching and disapproving of their actions. Without any pressure or oversight, the civil unrest will spill over and effect the entire world. Please consider voting in support of resolution 20-712 and showing the world how welcoming and open ST. Paul is.

It is about American and International human rights values that do not allow victimization on the basis of faith or creating concentration camps by denying the right to citizenship. I hope other city councils will also follow your footsteps.

Thanking you and the residents of St. Paul,

Best regards,

Babar

(Zaheer Babar Khan)

Email: zbkhan@gmail.com

7280 Bagpipe Blvd,

Eden Prairie, MN 55346

Dear City Councilor,

I am a long-term proud resident of Minnesota of Indian origin. We call the greater Twin Cities home because of the vibrant, democratic, and welcoming society which respects human rights, religious freedom, and wellbeing of all individuals. The emergence of Resolution 20-172 is very disturbing indeed and I write to you again with strongest opposition and ask that it be TABLED. I can debate and write at length but respecting your time, I write to illustrate the following facts:

1. Councilwoman Jane L. Prince, one of the sponsors of the resolution, specifically referred to the demonstrations in February during President Trump's visit. I was in India at the time and watched it in real-time. Those were highly politically motivated demonstrations orchestrated by certain individuals. Truly a very unfortunate incidence causing 53 deaths among Hindus and Muslims, including a Hindu investigating Intelligent Bureau Officer. We must condemn such acts of violence anywhere. Since then, the [arrested](#) include Tahir Hussain (Aam Aadmi party councilor), Ishrat Jahan (Congress party councilor) and an activist Khalid Saifi. P

lease note that many innocent families suffered because of the violence and hatred fueled under the misguided leadership of Tahir Hussain; note who orchestrated- individuals of one faith representing the opposition political parties.

2. In addition, there are infamous *Shaheen Bagh* protests, orchestrated by similar political motivations to polarize the community, which inconvenienced thousands of children going to school and commuters to and from work every single day for months. The Hindu majority has not only tolerated but let the protest continue without any act of violence respecting individual right to protest under the Constitution. I want to assert that Hindus are the most tolerant, God-fearing, and law-abiding individuals. I hope that Councilor Rebecca Noecker, who spent more than a year in Pune, will positively share her own experiences and speak about the harmonious coexistence of people of different faiths. India is home to minority religions: Sikhs, Jains, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, just to name a few.

3. I strongly encourage you to read the full article: <https://myind.net/Home/viewArticle/why-dont-hindus-stand-up-against-anti-hindu-anti-india-agenda> At a minimum, allow me to cite Rep Tulsi Gabbard, US Presidential candidate, and a Hindu, how she expresses her feelings about Hinduphobia. The current resolution before the City is nothing more than an attempt to perpetrate totally unsubstantiated Hinduphobia by a group of misinformed people who want to divide our communities. We must not let that happen. I argue that the City should be spending time and precious resources of taxpayers to discuss more important issues during these uncertain and extraordinary times of COVID 19 rather than interfering in the internal affairs of the largest democracy and a natural ally of the United States. I assert that the cultural and trade relations between Minnesota and India will strengthen with your VOTE AGAINST the motion.

Here is what Rep. Gabbard says about India:

“Although India and Hindus were attacked for centuries, India maintained a peaceful environment and communal harmony, to a great extent. India is the second most populated country in the world with 1.34 billion people...in essence, four times the population of the U.S. in less-than-one-third of U.S land. You can certainly imagine the complexity India faces as a country. In comparison, the issues are managed brilliantly, and balance is restored quickly oftentimes. The recent past has been particularly difficult for the Hindus, Hinduism, and India; as we have witnessed communist media’s effort to defame, divide and weaken India.

These questions have been bothering me for a while –

1. Is there one Hindu (or a group) who stood up against blatant bias, negative narratives, defamation, and anti-Hindu and anti-India propaganda?
2. Why would U.S. Democrats, like Bernie Sanders, an ultra-leftist communist, be influenced to propagate such sick anti-India, anti-Hindu statements, directly inciting violence against Hindus worldwide?
3. How many Indian Muslims were driven out of India?
4. Why are the western media relentlessly pushing an one-sided narrative of victimhood, painting the Modi government as fascists, murderous, genocidal, xenophobic and anti-Muslim?

LET’S START WITH SOME FACTS ABOUT INDIA:

First, India is the ONLY country with the largest Muslim population outside Muslim-majority countries
Second, India holds third of world's Muslim population (10.9%), slightly behind Pakistan (11.1%) and Indonesia (12.7%) [Note, just a few years ago, India was at the second place over Pakistan]

Third, India has over 200 million Muslims - can one neighboring Islamic state provide such statistics of minorities?

Fourth, India remains a secular country. YET, the neighboring Islamic State nations (Pakistan & Bangladesh) cannot say the same

Fifth, there are 51 Islamic nations, 0 Hindu countries, 1 Jewish country, and the rest are Christian and Buddhist countries, out of 195 countries in the world

Sixth, India is a Hindu majority country with 79% Hindus and 21% minority. This percentage is retained more-or-less constant since the 1947 India-Pakistan division. Nepal was a Hindu nation at the time of monarchs, BUT not anymore - it was declared as a secular state in 2007 after abolition of its monarchy
Seventh, Pakistan's minority number dropped from ~27% in 1947 to 2% now, and numbers fell from ~23% to 10% in Bangladesh.”

In closing, I ask that you TABLE the motion to preserve, promote, and perpetuate harmony among all irrespective of who they are, where they come from, and what faith they belong to. Our city must rise to her strength of welcoming ethnic groups of multi-faith and multicultural backgrounds. I hope that all of you are aware of Asian Indian community, including thousands of doctors and other professionals, in supporting the larger effort in fighting the invisible and deadly COVID 19. Together we will win that fight and make our community a better place if you TABLE or at least VOTE AGAINST the resolution 20-172. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Vijendra Agarwal, Ph.D.
(Former Dean at Minnesota State University, Mankato)
11599 Aileron Ct.
Inver Grove Heights, MN 5507

Dear Sir/Madam

I understand that your council is going to table a resolution no. 20- 712 about India's Citizenship amendment act. I would like to express my strong reservations with regards to this dangerous, divisive and inaccurate resolution. The Indian government, through its legitimate parliamentary process, passed the citizenship's amendment act with majority.(I hope you respect majority voice) .The fact of the matter is that this act grant citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jain , Parsee and christian minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

However Muslims from these countries have been excluded rightly because they are not minorities in those officially Islamic countries. Furthermore, there is no bar on Muslims from anywhere in the world to seek & apply for an Indian citizenship. Any Muslim who is persecuted in Islamic countries for practicing their version of Islam can apply for asylum in India.

India has a shining past record. It has given asylum to Tibetans (thrown out by China), and people from Afghanistan, Uganda and Sri Lanka

Please refer to the Lautenberg amendment act ratified by the US congress. In striking similarities to CAA , USA federal government back in 1989 resolved to allow only Jews and other minorities from USSR to settle in USA.

This resolution falsely alleges that the government of India is about to strip the citizenship of 200 millions Muslims. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Please be aware of religious fanatics organisations in your city which may have helped to draft this divisive resolution. This resolution will perpetuate unverified harmful message which will divide the peaceful community of Saint Paul.

This citizenship act is really an internal matter of India and Indians. I am surprised & appalled why the council is wasting time and tax payer's money and hurting the sentiments of thousands of American Indians.

Finally, this flawed resolution will have a detrimental effect in the overall context of the India- US good relations.

I am a US citizen and a 74+ years retired person with high educational background per US standards having lived in the US for more than 40 years. I have sufficient background knowledge of erstwhile India that are present India, Pakistan, and Bangla Desh to provide my input to you to make an informed decision on the subject resolution.

I urge the St Paul City Council Members (CMs) to reject the resolution or table it to the future so that the CMs have time to understand the complete situation to make an informed decision.

The resolution is symbolic. The Resolution cannot change the India's CAA that has been passed by the Indian Parliament (equivalent to the Congress in US) and Rajya Sabha (equivalent to the Senate in US) and has been vetted and approved by the President of India.

The BJP party has majority in the Parliament but not in the Rajya Sabha. There are more than 15 political parties unlike practically only 2 parties in the US. The India is the largest democracy in the world with over 1.3 billion population comprising of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jains, Bahais, and atheists - practically every religion in the world.

The CAA granted citizenship to around 33,000 persecuted people of minority religions from India's 3 neighboring Islamic countries who have been living in India for 5 years before Dec 2019. The Muslims are not persecuted in the 3 neighboring Islamic countries. Per Forbes website a few days back in Pakistan a 14 years young girl was abducted, converted to Islam and forcibly married to her abductor. Such news are common. Please read the Forbes report at <https://flip.it/TX.oAT> , According to the report around 1000 girls and women from the religious minority families in the age group of 14-25 years are abducted every year. The CAA granted Indian citizenship to such persecuted religious minorities.

The CAA retains provisions to grant citizenship to people from all countries including Muslims from neighboring Islamic countries.

At this time the requirements and timeline for the NRC (National Register of Citizens) in all India have not been defined. The NRC requirements/timeline have to go through the legislative process. The Resolution statement about the NRC is speculative and fear monger without any substantiation.

Having said that the resolution contains convoluted, misleading, imaginative, and fear mongering statements ignoring the history behind the CAA.

On 5/12/2012 I viewed the video of St Paul City Council's meeting on 5/6/2020 on the subject resolution. It was interesting to note that Council Member (CM) Jane Prince opposed the CM Chris Tolbert's proposal to postpone the vote to 6/3/2020 so that the CMs have time to understand the issue to make an informed decision. Knowing the complexity of the issue, in my humble opinion, to make an informed decision the CMs need much more time than Mr. Chris Tolbert proposed because it will take time to know the history of India since 1947 to completely understand the CAA. The CAA awarded citizenship to around 33,000 people who had been religiously persecuted minorities in India's neighboring Islamic countries of Pakistan, Bangla Desh and Afghanistan. **The Muslims are not persecuted minorities in the India's 3 neighboring Islamic countries. the Pakistan and Bangla Desh were carved out of India for Muslims.**

If the resolution is only symbolic then why did CM Jane Prince opposed to the postponement to just 6/3/2020 that should have been even longer under the present stay-home situation in Minnesota and US so that the City Hall can schedule in-person hearing? There is no urgency on the resolution. What is CM Jane Prince's personal interest to rush the resolution without having public hearing especially when the Resolution is symbolic only?

CM Jane Prince in her comments in the 5/6/2020 meeting quoted that the CAA is against LGBTQ community. The fact is that the CAA does not talk about sexual preferences. CM Jane is making misleading and convoluted statements probably on hearsay without reading the CAA. In short, even CM Jane Prince does not have the correct information to make an informed decision. it seems that she has already made a decision because CAIR might have promised good election contribution for her future election.

CM Jane Prince quoted an unsubstantiated case in her opposition to the postponement (may be her instantly made up story or a unsubstantiated story of her contact) conveniently ignoring the publicly known situations that all quarantined religious communities including Muslims in India are being taken care of during the Covid 19 pandemic in-spite of inhuman behavior of some quarantined Muslim males towards female nurses and doctors like them showing their private parts to the female care-givers, urinating in the hall ways etc. it seems that CM Jane Prince is either ignorant or selectively ignoring the complete situation. Or Ms Jane Prince has some hidden agenda!

Just an observation that the CM Jane Prince or St Paul City Hall, or the CAIR did not bring up any resolution against China's restriction on Uighur Muslim community in China. The China does not allow Uighur Muslim community to support their tradition beards and build domes on their the mosques. What are the reasons there is no resolution against China?

For your kind information the Indian Government, using the tax payers money, has been subsidizing the Muslims' Haj travel to Mecca while not providing the similar privileges to other religious communities to travel to their holy places. In other words the Muslims have been treated better than other religious communities in India. The Haj subsidy will end by 2022 based on the Indian Supreme Court order of 2012.

The Lautenberg Amendment that became US law in 1989-1990 providing special status to persecuted people from USSR (present Russia and Ukraine) for seeking US citizenship. The Lautenberg-Specter Amendment added Bahais from Iran. Is the St Paul City Hall going to pass a resolution against the US Congress and Senate on the Lautenberg-Specter Amendments? if not, then why double standard - the Resolution against the CAA but not against Lautenberg-Specter Amendments.? is it not a hypocrisy or bigotry?

The draft Resolution has already caused damage to the Indian origin community of St Paul, Minnesota, and US. I hope that the St Paul City Council will take appropriate steps not to further create a division especially when the resolution is symbolic and the CMs do not have knowledge of Indian history and do not have time and resources to learn. Plus the St Paul City Hall must respect the largest democracy in the world that has more than 15 political parties compared with practically only 2 in the US.

I hate to say the fact that the St Paul City Council is wasting St Paul residents tax money to spend on a proposition that is devoid of facts, is misleading, that is out of the St Paul City Council Charter per the City Council own statement that it is only symbolic, is divisive, and potentially harmful to the State of Minnesota and US.

Please keep in mind that in the present pandemic state India is supplying cheap drugs to US to fight the pandemic whether the drug is useful or not is the medical fraternity decision. Additionally, consider that India is supporting a lot of jobs in US by procuring military hardware from US that India previously was procuring from Russia and Europe.

I hope that CM Jane Prince will honestly declare the financial contributions to her election funds and the funds that are coming from the CAIR.

All CMs will be open to the St Paul electorates about their decision making leadership. In my humble opinion, the human rights favoring persons must take the leadership to stop the human rights violations in the originating country like Pakistan, Bangla Desh, and Afghanistan instead of passing a resolution against India that provided an opportunity to the persecuted religious minorities to lead a dignified life. The Muslims from Pakistan, Bangla Desh and Afganistan are not persecuted minorities. The Pakistan and Bangla Desh were carved out of erstwhile India on demands of Muslims.

I urge the St Paul City Council to reject the resolution or table it to the future so that there is a public hearing. The resolution is symbolic only. The CAA has already granted citizenship to persecuted religious minorities from 3 neighboring Islamic countries. The NRC has no defined requirements and timeline and hence anything about NRC is speculative and fear mongering. In short the Resolution contains convoluted, misleading, imaginative, speculative, and fear mongering statements.

The Resolution contains two unrelated issues:

- (A) CAA
- (B) NRC

(A) CAA

1. The CAA provides expedited path to citizenship to around 33,000 persecuted people of minority religion people from India's neighboring Islamic countries who have been living in India before Dec 2014. The religion of people involved who have been living in India are

Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Jains. These people or their parents or grandparents were Indian citizens when Pakistan was carved out of erstwhile India in 1947 for Muslims that declared itself an Islamic state. Bangladesh separated from Pakistan in 1971.

The Muslims in the India's neighboring Islamic countries are can not be considered as persecuted minorities especially so when the Pakistan and Bangla Desh were carved out of erstwhile India for Muslims on the Muslims's demand in 1947. The partitioned India in 1947 accepted the Muslims to continue living in India even after some of its wings were cut by the Muslims on Muslims demands.

2. The CAA retains provisions to grant citizenship to people from other countries including Muslims from neighboring Islamic countries.

3. The CAA does not take away citizenship of any Indian citizen including Indian Muslims

4. *Per Arif Mohammad who is an Indian muslim and learned Quran scholar, Quran - the holy book of Muslims recognizes the persecuted minorities as a Special Class*

5. The CAA has been passed in the Parliament (equivalent to the Congress in US) and Rajya Sabha (equivalent to the Senate in US). The BJP does not have majority in the Rajya Sabha. After passing of Parliament and Rajya Sabha the President vetting and approval is required to become a law.

There are more than 20 political parties including Communist parties in India as compared to practically only 2 in US.

6. The CAA is an humanitarian act to grant expedited citizenship to around 33,000 persecuted people from minority religions in the India's neighboring Islamic countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who have been living in India before Dec 2014 so that they can live a dignified life for themselves and their future generation. The Muslims in the neighboring countries cannot be considered as religiously persecuted minority. The CAA does not does not change the path to the Indian citizenship to the Muslims from all over the world.

7. After the partition of erstwhile India in 1947 the percentage of Muslims in India was less than 10% while now it is more than 15 % while the population of minority religions in Pakistan and Bangla Desh has come down to less than 3% and 10 % respectively. The CAA provided citizenship to the persecuted people and does not take away citizenship of any Indian irrespective of their religion.

8. India has welcomed people from all religions for more than 1000 years and lived in harmony for example Zoroastrians (called Parsis in India who were forced to leave Persia present Iran), Christians, Jews, Tibetans who migrated to India when China took over Tibet. The real minorities in the present India are Christians, Jews, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Tibetans, Zoroastrians, etc. who have no complaints and living peacefully.

(B) NRC

(1) *The NRC was implemented all over India only once in 1951.*

(2) The NRC in the State of Assam started in 2013 when the Congress government was ruling based on the Indian Supreme Court of India's order. The agreement to conduct the NRC was signed in 1985-1986 between the India's Central Government (Federal Government in the US)

and the Assam State government. The present BJP government is continuing with the NRC in Assam under the supervision of the Supreme Court of India

(3.1) Assam NRC eligibility requirements are same for all residents of Assam irrespective of their religion.

(3.2) Any one of the documents out of list of documents (29) is acceptable.

The Indian law requires all births and deaths to be reported. A birth certificate is an acceptable document for the NRC.

(3.3) There are acceptable solutions/work-around to the lost documents or not having the documents e.g. the sworn statements from other citizens

(3.4) the Assam NRC is in the resolution process for left out people of Hindu, Muslims and other faiths.

(3.5) There is no reported case of detention or deportation of people in Assam who are missed out of NRC

(4) The NRC for rest of India has not been tabled in the Indian Parliament, the NRC eligibility requirements have not been drafted/notified, and hence the NRC is not an issue. The Resolution statement on NRC is speculative and fear mongering.

Dear Councilmembers,

As a Hindu who has attended and helped organize several anti-NRC / CAA protests at Shaheen Bagh (New Delhi), Park Circus (Kolkata), Shantiniketan (West Bengal), I can attest to the mass fear, anxiety, and unrest that the constitutional amendment measures have resulted in. These measures represent the latest attempt by the RSS / ruling BJP party to reconfigure who can be an 'insider', and who it proclaims as 'outsiders.' The ruling government basically got Indian citizens to vote for it, and prepared to declare them non-citizens after it got elected, overnight.

St. Paul Hindus have a responsibility towards the millions of Indians of any community, facing erasure at the hands of a government that doesn't care about the poor (as its response to the current COVID lockdown amply goes to show). I support this resolution, and as South Asians living in Minnesota, I want to make sure that we do everything we can to use our voice. Because the government of India is listening.

Thank you so much for your work,
Ritika

--

Ritika Ganguly, Ph.D.

She/Her/Hers

ganguly.ritika@gmail.com



Hindu Community Center

10530 Troy Lane North
Maple Grove, MN 55311
501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

Date: 13 May 2020

Subject: Rejection of RES 20-712 by Prominent Citizens of the Indian American Community of Minnesota

Dear City Council Members of St. Paul, MN

We are a group of long-term residents of the Twin Cities and are prominent members of the Indian and Hindu American Communities of Minnesota. We are writing to you to express our collective dismay at RES 20-712 proposed by the St. Paul City Council for a vote on May 20, 2020.

It is our considered opinion that the tone and the content of this Resolution promotes misunderstanding and marginalization of our community, puts us in the way of harm, and distracts from our city's collective fight against the ongoing Pandemic.

This past April, city council members introduced RES 20-621 that rightly condemned acts of racism directed against our fellow Americans - immigrants from the Asian and Pacific Islander communities residing in our state, who were being blamed unfairly for the Covid-19 Pandemic. The current RES 20-712 is opposite in its essential nature and impact. It injects divisive overseas politics into Minnesota and thereby endangers the safety and well-being of people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities by creating a hostile environment for us and creating fault lines within the community. We know that the City Council strives for peace and friendship in our community. This resolution achieves the opposite.

We urge you to withdraw RES 20-712 or vote against its passage for the following main reasons:

- 1. It mis-states facts that are easily verifiable. Inaccurate declarations are made worse with incendiary language.**
- 2. It divides our local communities along religious and political lines at a time when we need to fight the Covid-19 Pandemic unitedly. The Resolution unnecessarily injects divisive overseas politics into local concerns.**
- 3. It endangers Indian Americans residing in Minnesota by falsely implying that their homeland is becoming some version of the Third Reich. Most Indian Americans here are first generation immigrants with strong family ties in India. The resolution makes them appear as racists and religious bigots. It also affects their relationship with family members back in India.**

4. It diminishes the valuable contributions of the Indian American community to Minnesota and undermines the healthy relationship between the two largest democracies in the world.

In **Appendix A** of this letter, we provide a Fact Check as 'Clarifications' for the various erroneous assertions made in RES 20-712 so that you get a correct and informed perspective.

There are 50,000 people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities. They are outstanding members of the community, contributing to a variety of notable sectors, including but not limited to healthcare, bio-technology and engineering, entrepreneurship, education, tourism and food service, retail etc. Numerous Indian, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh community organizations in Minnesota are volunteering tirelessly to serve other Minnesotans during the ongoing Pandemic. We wish to emphasize that **when a city council paints an entire country in broad and factually dubious strokes, it reflects negatively on all people of Indian origin, and especially on Hindus Americans who reside in Minnesota as fellow Americans. It also promotes Hinduphobia.**

Indian businesses have made a significant investment in the Twin Cities and are creating jobs for Minnesotans. According to a study by the Confederation of Indian Industry, Minnesota has attracted more than \$1.8 billion and created 2,500 jobs as a direct result of investment from India-based companies, ranking Minnesota third among American states in Indian investment dollars. Several Indian companies are doing business in Minnesota: TATA Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro, and ITC Infotech are in the IT and telecom industry; Essar in the materials and manufacturing sector. Twin Cities based businesses also have significant and mutually beneficial investments in India. For example, Cargill began a five-year investment plan of \$240M in 2017 intended to improve food safety and economic development and benefit the food processing and agriculture industries. 3M is heavily invested in India for over 30 years now. Target Corporation and Medtronic Ltd (with its major operations run from Fridley, MN) are other examples of companies with a broad footprint in India.

This resolution diminishes and disregards the deep economic relationship between Minnesota and India and demeans the worth of Indian Americans in our state as fellow Americans. The two organizations who have drafted this resolution do not fully represent their own communities, let alone South Asians or even Indian Americans as a whole. In the coming years, the governments of the United States of America and India are expected to coordinate closely to fight this Pandemic. It is pertinent to note here that the largest vaccine producing company in India is owned by an Indian minority citizen.

Below is a list of individuals who endorse the contents of this letter (along with the Appendix). Their affiliations, *while not reflective of institutional endorsements*, give you an indication of their stellar community service to the several prominent institutions that they have founded and nurtured in our esteemed state. You have heard from some of our community organizations. Through this letter, our intent is to convey how RES 20-712 has deeply troubled us as *individual* Americans. The country of our origin has been tarred with crude and broad strokes without even a basic fact check, thereby making us feel otherized and unwelcome in a state that we have called home and contributed to for decades.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shashikant Sane

Co-Founder and Ex Chairperson, Hindu Society of Minnesota;

Founder and President, Hindu Community Center;
Founding Physician, Children's Hospital of Minneapolis

List of Endorsing Individuals in Alphabetical Order (Affiliation Stated for Identification Only):

Dr. Vijendra Agarwal

Former Dean, Minnesota State University, Mankato
President and Co-founder, Vidya Gyan www.vidya-gyan.org

Mr. Vishal Agarwal

Advisory Board Member, Hindu American Foundation <https://www.hinduamerican.org/>
Trustee Executive Council, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Mr. Kaustubh Alegaonkar

Education Chair, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://sites.google.com/site/hsmneducation/>

Mrs. Sushumna Aggarwal

Ex BOD, Diversity Endowment Fund (Asia Pacific Endowment), St. Paul
<https://www.spmcf.org/nonprofits/grants-for-nonprofits/diversity-endowment-fund>
Past President, The Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Dr. Kumar G. Belani

Professor of Anesthesiology, Division Head, Clinical Chief & Pediatric Anesthesiologist-In-Chief, M Health Fairview Masonic Children's Hospital
Adjunct Professor in Medicine & Pediatrics and Environmental Health Sciences, Schools of Medicine & Public Health; Distinguished International Professor, AHC
University of Minnesota

Mr. Arun Bhargava

Coordinator, Sunday Sermons, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Mrs. Raj Choudhary

Executive Director, Sewa-Aifw – Asian Indian Family Wellness <https://sewa-aifw.org/>

Dr. Sitakant Dash

Chairperson, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>
BOD, Indian Association of Minnesota <https://iamn.org/>
Founder President, Dr. Dash Foundation <http://drdashfoundation.com/>

Mr. Kuldeep Dhar, Entrepreneur

BOD, Hindu Community Center of Minnesota

Dr. Vijay B Dixit

Founder and Chairman, Shreya R Dixit Memorial Foundation for Distraction-free Driving
<https://shreyadixit.org/>
Member of State of Minnesota Commissioner's Task Force for Teen Driver Safety
Author: 'One Split Second' (A book on Distracted Driving Epidemic)

Mr. Ranjan Dumra, Entrepreneur

CEO, Diverse Maintenance Solutions, Inc. <https://dmsimn.com/>

President, Sveda Organics, Inc. <https://svedaorganics.com/>

Mr. Ram Gada

Honorary BOD, Indian Association of Minnesota <https://iamn.org/>

Founder, Jain Community Center of Minnesota <https://jaincentermn.org/>

Trustee Executive Council, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Honorary Council Member, Minnesota Historical Society <https://www.mnhs.org/>

Mrs. Shashi Gupta

Past Vice President and President, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Chair of Advisory Board, Asia Pacific Endowment/ St. Paul Foundation

<https://www.spmcf.org/nonprofits/grants-for-nonprofits/diversity-endowment-fund>

Election Judge for St Paul- Ramsey County for mid-term/Federal elections since 2007

Nominated by Rowzat Shipchandler to serve on Racial Equity panel at the 75th yr celebration of the St. Paul Foundation in 2015

Dr. Manu Madhok

Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Minnesota

Attending Physician, Emergency Department, Children's Minnesota

Ex-Secretary, Chinmaya Mission Twin Cities <http://chinmaya-twincities.org/cmtcwp/>

Mrs. Bhakti Modi

Administrator, Hindu American Temple School (under HSMN)

<https://sites.google.com/site/hatshsmn/>

World Hindu Council of American Youth Leader <https://www.vhp-america.org/>

Neha Markanda

Co-Founding Teacher, Hindu American Temple School <https://sites.google.com/site/hatshsmn/>

Strategic Planning Chair, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Dr. Ned Mohan

Oscar A. Schott Professor, Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering, U of Minnesota

Member of National Academy of Engineering; Fellow IEEE

Dr. Ramaiah Muthyala

Research Associate Professor

Department of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology

University of Minnesota

Mr. Godan Nambudiripad

Ex-President, Indian Association of Minnesota <https://iamn.org/>

Ex President, School of Indian Languages & Culture, St. Paul

<https://sites.google.com/site/silcminnesota/home>

Mr. Mahendra Nath, Entrepreneur

CEO & President, Nath Companies <https://nathcompanies.com/who-we-are/owners/>

Owner of numerous Hotels and other Businesses in Minnesota

Ramesh Noone

Chair of Public Relations Committee, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Ms. Ekta Prakash

Chair, CapiUSA (serving refugees and immigrants) <https://www.capiusa.org/>

Executive Director and Chair, Sewa-Aifw BOD <https://sewa-aifw.org/>

Mr. Sunil Puri

The Geeta Ashram (Brooklyn Park, MN) <https://geetaashrammn.org/>

Dr. Kumud Sane

Co-Founder and Ex-Chairperson, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Dr. Shashikant Sane

Co-Founder and Ex-Chairperson, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Founder and President, Hindu Community Center of Minnesota

<https://www.facebook.com/hccminnesota/>

Founding Physician, Children's Hospital of Minneapolis

Mrs. Vallabha Tantry

Immediate Past President, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

MN Volunteer, World Hindu Council of America <https://www.vhp-america.org/>

Dr. Prabhat Tekriwal

Ex-President, Minnesota Hindu Milan Mandir <https://www.facebook.com/MNMilanMandir/>

APPENDIX A: Fact Check and Clarifications of Clauses contained in Resolution 20-712

Our Fact Check is provided as 'CLARIFICATION'

Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste by rejecting the Bharatiya Janata Party's Islamophobic ideology, and opposing India's National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act.

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council supports universal human rights for all peoples, and opposes discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity, race, and religion; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul has adopted a number of resolutions expressing solidarity with all members of our community, including most recently Resolution 20-621, "Condemning xenophobia and racism against Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in the City of Saint Paul"; which was unanimously approved on April 8, 2020; and

CLARIFICATION: Resolution 20-621 rightfully dealt with a local issue of relevance, whereas RES 20-712 deals with an issue pertaining to foreign policy that:

1. wades into an arena that the authors have no subject matter expertise;
2. promotes numerous misstatements of facts and harmful stereotypes;
3. endangers the safety and well-being of people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities by creating a hostile environment for local residents and creating fault lines within the community; and
4. takes away the focus from fight the Covid-19 Pandemic

WHEREAS, the nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome, and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty; and

CLARIFICATION: Even though 80% of India's population is and has been Hindu, it was founded as a secular nation at the time of Partition. That said, India has adopted a peculiar interpretation of "secular" which insists on non-establishment of religion, but not a separation of religion and state. What this has translated to is a state in which Indian Christians and Muslims have their own religion-based family laws, which very often work to the detriment of women, and complete autonomy over their faith-based institutions.

Hindu institutions, on the other hand, are required to endure government interference and control at both the state and national levels, leading to situations where non-Hindu political administrators and appointees exert control over and interfere in the management of Hindu institutions, and such institutions fall prey to mismanagement and disrepair due to political corruption, amongst other challenges to freedom of religion of Hindus.

Please note that the point of providing this context is so that council members understand that India's interpretation of secularism is unlike that of ours here in the US, and that this interpretation has harmed Hindus and interfered in their religious freedom, in spite of them being a national, not state level, majority.

Indian Americans affirm that one of the Fundamental Rights in the Constitution of India gives special rights to linguistic, religious and other minorities that are not necessarily extended to the majority community. In contrast, RES 20-712 is entirely and only about Indian Muslims. By implication, it grossly misrepresents other communities in India and as well as immigrants from these communities residing in the Twin Cities.

WHEREAS, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is dominated by the exclusionary ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (National Volunteers Association), which promotes discrimination against Muslims; and

CLARIFICATION: The BJP in its [campaign platform](#), specifies a commitment to “empowerment and the ‘development with dignity’ of all minorities (Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains and Parsis, etc..)” It also includes a promise of inclusive development that would benefit historically disadvantaged castes, tribal people, women, children, the elderly, and transgender people. Most, if not all of the government development programs have benefited these communities.

2019 saw the highest election turnout, even surpassing previous high in 2014. Of the 900 million Indians eligible to vote, approximately 600 million cast their votes -- that's a 67% turnout. BJP won by a landslide, winning 303 seats (353 for the entire coalition), which is more than the 272 seats required for a majority. The party earned the votes of women, young people, historically disadvantaged castes, and religious minorities (½ of Parliamentary seats in minority-concentrated areas). In short, hundreds of millions across all genders, religions, and castes voted for the winning coalition in a largely peaceful and democratic election. Your remarks therefore unfairly indict the largest democracy in the world and its citizens.

By your incendiary and inaccurate description of the BJP, you are insinuating that the millions of Indians who voted for the BJP promote discrimination against Muslims. This is an unfair indictment of friends and relatives of Minnesotans of Indian origin, many of whom, given the large numbers voting for the BJP, likely voted for the party. The Resolution also by extension implies that we too are related to bigots.

You should also understand that the Indian usage of the term “nationalist” is the equivalent of “patriotic” or “civic nationalism” as opposed to the Western and European usage and history of “ethnic nationalism.”

Once again, we provide this context so that the Council members do not uncritically see a foreign country through their own ethnocentric lenses.

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2019, the Indian parliament under the leadership of the BJP government and Prime Minister Modi passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which claims to help refugees fleeing religious persecution from neighboring countries, but which discriminates against Muslims by excluding millions of Muslims who have come to India to flee wars in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and other Muslim countries; and

CLARIFICATION: The BJP constitutes 54% of the Indian Parliament's lower house (equivalent of the US House) and 35% of its upper house (equivalent of the US Senate). The law was passed by an overwhelming majority (80%) of the lower house and 55% of the upper house, indicating broad-based support beyond BJP and its political allies. The law was then granted assent by the President of India. To download the official copy of CAA, click the Government of India website here -- <http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2019/214646.pdf>

The CAA does not change citizenship laws or other immigration laws, nor does it change the rights of Indian Muslims. Any non-Indian Muslims are able to emigrate to India through any legal channels. A recent and high-profile example, in fact, is that of the famous and hugely popular singer Adnan Sami, an Afghan whose father was actually a pilot in the Pakistani Air Force, who was granted Indian citizenship after the CAA was passed.

The Citizenship Amendment (CAA) removes substantial barriers to legal resettlement and citizenship by offering amnesty and a reduced residency requirement for naturalization to religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who sought shelter in India on or before December 31, 2014 due to religious persecution in their native countries. The law serves refugees who are Buddhists, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, not just Hindus. Please also note that a large number of Hindus and Christians fleeing Pakistan are from Dalit or "scheduled caste" communities.

Numerous petitions against the passage of CAA have been submitted to the Supreme Court of India. It has twice refused to stay the law. The Indian Judiciary are not political appointees, unlike in the United States and has earned a reputation of being fiercely independent. The democratic institutions of India are robust and we trust that the law will take its own course.

The horrific human rights conditions of religious minorities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan is well documented. Religious minorities there face institutional, social, and religious persecution, and are not well served in these three nations which have privileged Islam as their official state religion. In all three countries religious minorities have seen demographic declines to the point of near extinction. Please educate yourself on the human rights conditions of Afghan, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani religious minorities, and the approximately 30,000 refugees who sought shelter in India and who the CAA seeks to help. The Hindu American Foundation has been publishing reports documenting the conditions of Hindus and other minorities in these three countries for the past 16 years. They also work directly with some of these refugee communities, providing desperately needed medical assistance in Western India. <https://www.hinduamerican.org/projects/human-rights-report>

Here are some verifiable statistics:

- **Afghanistan:** The decadal census numbers indicate that since 1980, only 200 Hindu and Sikh families remain in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan of the original 200,000 individuals. Just two months ago, 29 Sikhs of the last surviving members of the community were killed by ISIS and a day later, their funeral procession was also attacked by militants. Now leaders of political parties who previously opposed the CAA

are requesting the Indian government to evacuate Hindus and Sikhs to India. Unfortunately, the matter is, however, sub-judice.

The St. Paul City Council should consider joining the call of Hindu Americans and Sikh Americans to the US Senate to expand the Lautenberg Amendment (see below) and provide refuge to Hindus and Sikhs still suffering in Afghanistan.

- **Bangladesh:** In the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh, minorities (Buddhists, Christians and Hindus) have fallen from 28% in 1941 to 10.5% in 2011. Further, while Bangladesh is taking in Rohingyas from Myanmar, it continues to marginalize its own minorities by force and through laws like the 'Enemy Property Act,' whereby widespread land grabs against minorities are allowed with impunity and without reprieve.
- **Pakistan:** Non-Muslims comprise a bare 3.6% of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's population, down from 21% in 1941.

In Pakistan, some 25 Hindu and Christian women and girls are kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam every month. Many are underage. These mostly young women are forced into marriages with men two to three times older or sold into sex trafficking. Christians, as well as Hindus, also face violence and murder when accused, even if falsely, of blasphemy.

In January 2020, a Muslim mob attacked the revered shrine of Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. The mob wanted to take away the daughter of the chief priest of the shrine, who had been earlier rescued from her captors and married off to a Muslim man. Pakistan punishes blasphemy and apostasy by death. Mere allegations result in minority members being lynched by Muslims. Right within the Twin Cities, there are religious minorities of Pakistani origin, but they are afraid to speak up for fear of their family members' safety back home. for the safety of their family members back home.

Lastly, there are NO WARS happening in Bangladesh, therefore, there are not millions or even hundreds of thousands of Muslims fleeing Bangladesh for that reason.

The wars that happened and are happening in Afghanistan as a result of the former Soviet Union, the United States, the Mujahadeen, the Taliban, ISIS, and others, have created a humanitarian crisis that has left Afghanistan holding a 32 year title of country producing the most refugees. Almost 95% of these refugees have fled to Pakistan and Iran. Hindus and Sikhs from Afghanistan have mostly fled to India, as it is their only safe haven in the region. The CAA, which the authors of this resolution ignorantly condemn, seeks to address the refugees stateless-ness.

The authors should ask this pertinent question: If CAIR is an honest broker of human rights of South Asians, why did it not insist that the resolution also highlight the ongoing atrocities against religious minorities in these three Islamic states in South Asia?

WHEREAS, the New York Times reported on December 22, 2019 that "The Indian home minister, Amit Shah, has vowed in speeches to expand the checks used in Assam to other states and then use the citizenship law to purge India of 'infiltrators' and 'termites'"; and

CLARIFICATION: The political rhetoric of India's Home Minister is indeed unfortunate and worthy of censure. That said, we do not think that our city should advise a foreign government on what to do with 10 to 20 million migrants who have not only entered India illegally, but many have also fraudulently obtained voting registrations allowing them to vote without any status whatsoever.

Illegal voting of this kind has disenfranchised actual citizens, and more importantly, indigenous people of the State of Assam, many of whom are members of protected tribes similar to Minnesota's Ojibwe, Chippewa, Lower Sioux, and others. These tribes deserve to have their sacred lands and unique cultures protected and require a voice in representative governance.

We hardly have our own country in order with regard to a fair and functional immigration system or adequate ways in which we respect, empower, or provide reparations to the original and indigenous people of this land, which we all have claimed as our own. City council time and resources would be better spent resolving some of these issues rather than casting stones.

WHEREAS, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship; and

CLARIFICATION: To reiterate, the CAA does not change citizenship or other immigration laws, nor does it impact the rights of India's 200 million Muslims, who enjoy all the freedoms that only secular democracies like India can offer their diverse citizenry. Even respected leaders of the [opposition party have affirmed](#) this fact.

Nations routinely create exceptions to rules to address pressing humanitarian crises.

Consider an American law that is strikingly similar to India's CAA - the Lautenberg-Specter Amendment. The Lautenberg Amendment creates a carve out, a reduced evidentiary burden, for select religious minorities from certain countries. In fact, our great state, with its rich history of welcoming immigrants and refugees, is home to some 12,500 beneficiaries of this very program that benefits Jews, Evangelical Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, and Ukrainian Orthodox Christians from states of the former Soviet Union. Persecuted Baha'i, Christians, and Jews from Iran, and Indochinese nationals are also included.

In the past, the US created special programs benefiting Cuban fleeing communism. Similarly, India passed temporary measures to take in over a million Sri Lankan Tamils, while excluding Sri Lankan Sinhalese. It has also welcomed Tibetan Chinese, including His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, to the exclusion of Han Chinese.

The idea that India be a refuge for religious minorities who were unable to leave West and East Pakistan (modern day Bangladesh) once the borders were drawn and the country split into three, originated during the time of Partition. Mahatma Gandhi raised the issue once the decision was made by the British to partition India into secular India and Islamic East and West Pakistan as there was concern even back then about the well-being of non-Muslims in a country being created on the basis of religion.

Recently the Muslim governor of the State of Kerala, Chief Minister Arif Mohammad Khan, [reminded critics](#) of this 70 year old promise.

WHEREAS, in 2019, the BJP government conducted a census of Assam state, that required registration of all persons in Assam in the National Register of Citizens (NRC),

requiring over two million Bengali Muslims to produce documents proving they were Indian citizens before 1971 or face detention in “foreigner” detention prisons that the Indian government has begun to build and fill; and

CLARIFICATION: This is inaccurate. The National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam was conducted on the orders of the Supreme Court of India (India too has three independent branches of government) at the conclusion of a court case filed by residents of Assam that dates back to a time when the Congress Party was in power (before 2014). The National Democratic Alliance, of which BJP is a major partner, unsuccessfully requested the Supreme Court for an extension to carry out the herculean task of accounting for over 30 million people. The first NRC exercise thus unfortunately failed. A second NRC was again hurriedly carried out, resulting in the exclusion of two million people.

According to newspaper reports, the majority were likely Hindu Bengalis. The government, however, has yet to release any information or data regarding religious affiliation. In the absence of verifiable data, the claim that two million Muslims alone were impacted is serious conjecture on the part of the authors. Moreover, the process has been stayed.

Much has been written in sensationalist media about the so called ‘detention centers.’ The fact of the matter is that there are a mere 6 such centers of which 3 predate 2014, when the BJP coalition came to power. All these can collectively hold a mere 2000 individuals, a far cry from the 20 million that is being implied. In fact, we cannot even understand how a 200 million strong community can be marginalized.

WHEREAS, many Indians lack documentation such as birth certificates to prove citizenship, and a nationwide expansion of the NRC could strip hundreds of millions of people (especially Muslims, oppressed castes, poor women, indigenous groups known collectively as Adivasi, and LGBTQ communities) of their Indian citizenship; and

CLARIFICATION: The Government of India has made clear that there is [no plan for a national NRC](#). It has also assured that if and when any NRC is administered, no one will be excluded on the basis of religion, gender, or caste (the latter which exists in all faith communities in India, not just Hindu).

The authors clearly have little understanding of the sheer diversity of Indians and did little to no fact-checking of the listing of groups provided by CAIR and IAMC that would allegedly be impacted should India ever conduct the legally mandated accounting of its citizenry, which the young democracy has never undertaken.

Muslims: First, Muslims are not a monolith. There is a rich diversity especially amongst Indian Muslims, in part due to India’s ethos of religious pluralism which has enabled a variety of Muslim sects, many of which are actually discriminated against in Muslim-majority countries, to flourish.

Second, the Council, by only mentioning Muslims, demonstrates a callous disregard for the millions of Indians of other faith and socio-economic backgrounds who also would lack documentation. Is it the intent of the St. Paul Council to endorse the rights of only one faith group over that of others, because that is what this resolution implies.

Oppressed Castes: Which oppressed castes are the authors referring to? There are poor, so-called “upper castes” who lack proper documentation, as there are wealthy, so-called “low castes” who lack proper documentation. People of a certain age may not have proper

documentation. People born in rural towns may not have documentation. Indian social groupings and their respective access to documentation is just not that simple. These “oppressed classes” are making progress. Yes, in an ideal world we would like it to happen immediately.

Please also note that both the current President of India, the Honorable Ram Nath Kovind and the Prime Minister, the Honorable Narendra Modi, belong to historically disadvantaged classes, in other words, “oppressed castes” – ‘Scheduled Caste’ community and ‘Other Backward Caste’ respectively.

Adivasis: Practically all Adivasi communities of India are unique to the country and considered indigenous to specific regions within India wherein they live either as forest dwellers or as tribal communities. For example, members of Gond, Baiga, Toda, Sarna, Garo, Khasi, and many other tribes are found only in India, therefore, it is impossible to declare them as foreigners. The word “Adivasi” means inhabitant from the earliest times or from the beginning.

Furthermore, most members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (of which Adivasi is one grouping) have government certificates which are required to access affirmative action benefits specifically for these communities. The suggestion, therefore, that Adivasis would face some undue hardship over and above that of others contradicts the ground reality.

LGBTQ: There is no basis to claim the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seeks to discriminate against LGBTQ people. In fact, the BJP led parliament passed the Transgender Protection of Rights Bill that went into effect this past January. The Humsafar Trust, the largest and one of the oldest LGBTQ groups in India has had to cancel its annual parade to dissociate itself from the appropriation by anti-CAA campaigners. Please see a co-founder of this trust, Mr. Ashok Row Kavi, who has [repeatedly posted his support](#) for the CAA on social media.

Atheists: In an introductory note, the authors had likewise added atheists as a victim of CAA/NRC, further demonstrating the lack of subject matter expertise or even basic understanding of India and its sheer religious and cultural diversity. While atheists are persecuted, even beheaded, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, India's civilizational ethos of pluralism has given rise and space to various philosophical traditions of atheism. Major Indian religions like Jainism and Buddhism are either atheist or agnostic. Millions of followers of these faiths, as well as others who are atheists, live in India without any persecution. Some of our own family members are atheists and the core Hindu principle of religious pluralism and freedom compels us to accept their right to dissent.

WHEREAS, the condition of losing citizenship is known as statelessness, and people who are stateless have no access to the rights that a nation guarantees its citizens, which in India are stipulated in Part III of India's constitution: the right to equality, right to freedom, right against exploitation, right to freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and right to constitutional remedies; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations has defined statelessness as a condition so horrific that a campaign has been launched to eradicate statelessness in the world by the year 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens will, either intentionally or otherwise, create additional stateless people in the world; and

CLARIFICATION: To reiterate a third time, the CAA does not change citizenship laws or other immigration laws, nor does it change the rights of Indian Muslims.

In fact, it seeks to address the legal status of **some 30,000 stateless individuals in India** -- individuals who are religious minorities from the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, who fled religious persecution in their home countries and sought refuge in India on or before December 31, 2014. The St. Paul City Council should be celebrating India's move.

Additionally, NRC does not exist. That the St. Paul City Council is criticizing a non-existent law further highlighting its complete lack of subject matter expertise.

WHEREAS, protests in India against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in December 2019 were met by fatal fire with live ammunition, arrests of thousands, and destruction by mobs and police of Muslim homes in cities such as Bijnor, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Sambhal, Firozabad, and Rampur; and

CLARIFICATION: The authors once again show callous disregard for non-Muslims, by erasing the Hindu and Sikh lives that were lost to some of these violent protests. This makes it appear that peaceful Muslim protestors were attacked by a uniformly Hindu police and mobs. Although there were violent protests in other states as well, all the cities in this statement are incidentally located in a single state of India ruled by the BJP that has an 80% majority in the state government – indicating the political agendas of the sponsors of this resolution. There were similar incidents in other states as well. The protests were often violent due to which it was the mobs that were controlled by police when they were attacked by protestors hurling rocks and firing guns, burning buses, trains, attacking Hindu homes etc. Note that all these protests had begun dying down before the Covid-19 finally brought to an end the last stronghold in New Delhi. There are plenty of YouTube videos that council members can see for themselves and determine if these protests uphold or align with democratic principles.

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council intends to convey dissent against President Trump and the United States for failure to censure the Indian government for not protecting all Indian residents equally; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council believes it is the duty of ordinary people to oppose the dangerous rise of racist, nationalist, and authoritarian leaders around the world, and believes that the Islamophobic authoritarianism of the Indian government in nuclear-armed India is of grave concern, not only to the 200 million Muslims in India, and to oppressed castes, women, indigenous, and LGBTQ people in India, but also to Saint Paul's South Asian immigrant community and to democratic government in the United States and around the world; and

CLARIFICATION: This clause, with its usage of strong and overtly accusatory language, just worsens the numerous factually inaccurate claims made throughout and compounds the offensiveness and potential damage this resolution has caused to tens of thousands of Minnesotans of Indian origin.

Given the fact that India is the largest democracy, and the BJP led alliance earned an overwhelming and landslide victory, the St. Paul City Council seems to be suggesting that those Indians, many of whom are close friends and relatives of tens of thousands of Minnesotans of Indian origin, who voted for the BJP or support the Government of India's move to provide refuge to persecuted religious minorities from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan are not "ordinary people" and are all racists, especially when this clause is read in the same context as another clause making a sloppy comparison to India with Nazi Germany.

Have the authors even paused to think both logically and logistically about the accusation it has lodged in this resolution with regard to 200 million Indian Muslims. After six years of the BJP in power, there have been no changes made to the fundamental rights of equality and religious freedom granted by India's Constitution or to India's citizenship and nationality laws (which do not discriminate on the basis of religion). Geographically, India is slightly more than one-third the size of the US and home to 1.35 Billion people. So in the absence of any major legal changes or physical space, are the authors of the resolution really suggesting that India is going to harm and render stateless a group of people equivalent to 60% of the American population.

This, of course, ignores the core principle rooted in the spirituality of India's 1.05 billion Hindus -- that of religious pluralism and religious freedom. It ignores the personal relationships and friendships that millions of Hindus and Muslims may have on the ground or the businesses they might have built and share, or the dozens of dargahs across the country, the tombs of Sufi saints, at which both Hindus and Muslims across India worship.

Please also note that there is no basis to this clause's suggestion that the CAA and the non-existent NRC would also lead to discrimination against women. It doesn't. The current government in India has appointed its first ever woman Finance Minister as well as its Defense Minister

Perhaps the council members do not realize that the wording of their resolution results in the conclusion that India is marginalizing everyone except its 7-8% upper caste Hindu male population and that 92-93% Indians are going to become 'stateless, scapegoated and targeted for discrimination, violence, and the abrogation of universal rights'. This is possible only in dictatorships, not in a country of 1.35 billion citizens that has been a robust democracy for decades.

WHEREAS, the Indian American Muslim Council and The Council on American-Islamic Relations and hundreds of activists and organizers have spoken out against the CAA and NRC;and

CLARIFICATION: The resolution is wrong on the claim that the National Registry of Citizens (NRC) will discriminate against LGBTQ people, atheists, Muslims, and low caste Hindus, and demonstrates the complete lack of knowledge and familiarity its authors have about India. Again, the Government of India has made clear that there is no plan for a national NRC. It has also assured that if and when any NRC is administered, no one will be excluded on the basis of religion, gender, or caste (the latter which exists in all faith communities in India, not just Hindu).

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council believes that India's Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens are inconsistent with the democratic values of the City of Saint Paul, and these Indian laws are threats to Saint Paul's South Asian communities of all castes and religions; and

CLARIFICATION: It is in fact RES 20-712 that is a threat to Indian and Hindu Americans in Minnesota. It has created a hostile environment for members of these communities, forcing them to have to dispel the many misstatements of facts about their country of origin and by implication, their friends and relatives, and stereotypes perpetuated about India and Hindus by this resolution's authors.

WHEREAS, the novel coronavirus is galvanizing the bigotry and violence against religious minorities in India and Saint Paul's South Asian community and have resulted in the Auschwitz Institute on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities issuing a warning to all governments of the world to be proactive in preventing violence and discrimination against religious and other minorities; and

CLARIFICATION: The suggestion that India is becoming a version of Third Reich by alluding to an institute named after Auschwitz is factually baseless and harmful to the safety of Minnesotans of Indian origin, especially as the country endeavors to provide refuge to some 30,000 persecuted and stateless Afghan, Bangladesh, and Pakistani religious refugees.

Raising "genocide" also betrays the [historical realities](#) of the region. Considering the war between then East and West Pakistan, which ended with the creation of Bangladesh, also resulted in the 1971 genocide of an estimated 2 million [majority Hindu Bengalis](#). Rape was used as a tool of war on a mass scale for the first time in modern history, with some 200,000 mostly Hindu women held captive in rape camps there for close to a year.

WHEREAS, according to the US Department of State, bilateral trade between the US and India exceeded \$142 billion in 2018, and according to the Star Tribune, exports from Minnesota to India were \$203.8 million in 2011; and

CLARIFICATION: There are 50,000 people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities. They are outstanding members of the community, contributing to a variety of notable sectors, including but not limited to healthcare, bio-tech and engineering, entrepreneurship, education, tourism and food service, retail. Numerous Indian community organizations in Minnesota are volunteering hard to serve other Minnesotans. **When a city council paints an entire country in broad and factually dubious strokes, it reflects on all people of Indian origin, and especially on Hindus Americans.**

Indian businesses have made a significant investment in the Twin Cities and are creating jobs for Minnesotans. According to a study by the Confederation of Indian Industry, Minnesota has attracted more than \$1.8 billion and created 2,500 jobs as a direct result of investment from India-based companies, ranking Minnesota third among American states in Indian investment dollars. Several Indian companies are doing business in Minnesota: TATA Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro and ITC Infotech are in the IT and telecom industry; Essar in the materials and manufacturing sector. Twin Cities based businesses also have significant, mutually beneficial investments in India. For example, Cargill began a five-year investment plan of \$240M in 2017 intended to food safety and economic development and benefit the food processing and agriculture industries. 3M is heavily invested in India for over 30 years now.

WHEREAS, the economic relationship including trade, manufacturing, and technical support between the US and India is threatened by the instability of civil unrest due to the Indian government's exclusionary ideology; and

CLARIFICATION: In the midst of the global pandemic, the US and a number of other countries are cooperating with India. And in the next couple of years, India is expected to play a leading role in the development and production of vaccines to prevent this disease. The largest vaccine producing company in India is also owned by a member of the minority community. At a time when we all need to be united and support the heroic effort of nations like India in fighting this unseen enemy, it is appalling that our city council should choose to issue a false indictment that is patronizing, mean-spirited and verifiably inaccurate.

WHEREAS, Saint Paul's business, residents and economy could be impacted by the continued escalating unrest in India caused by the CAA and NRC laws;

CLARIFICATION: In fact, RES 20-217 incentivizes violence by rejecting the democratic process in India and supporting political and religious groups that have resorted to violence after losing elections. There are plenty of [YouTube videos](#) that council members can see for themselves and determine if these protests uphold or align with democratic principles.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Saint Paul City Council reaffirms Saint Paul as a welcoming city and expresses solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste; and be it further

CLARIFICATION: CAIR does not represent all South Asians or even South Asian Muslims. IAM itself has had 2 Indian American Muslim presidents in the last 6 years including the immediate past President. The Saint Paul City Council has single-handedly created fissures in our community by wading into a political arena it knows little about. It has created a hostile environment for people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities by perpetuating unverified information and harmful stereotypes about Hindus that we are now forced to dispel.

RESOLVED, that the integrity of the trade relationship between the Twin Cities and India must continue to be based upon the democratic rights of our nation's peoples, the rule of law and freedom of religion, and be it further

RESOLVED, The City Council opposes the National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship Amendment Act in India, which are discriminatory to Muslims, oppressed castes, women, indigenous peoples known as Adivasi, and the LGBTQ community, and any other efforts that render vulnerable populations anywhere to become stateless, scapegoated, and targeted for discrimination, violence, and the abrogation of human rights that are universal to one and all.

Councilmember Prince received a few hundred copies of the following email:

Dear Councilmember Jane L. Prince:

I am writing to thank you and express my deepest gratitude and appreciation for your moral and courageous stand in defending Human Rights, Civil Liberties, and Religious Freedom across the globe by introducing resolution #20-712 that is rightly "Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste by rejecting the Bharatiya Janata Party's Islamophobic ideology, and opposing India's National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act."

I urge you to vote and adopt the resolution in its entirety. Resolution 20-712 allows Saint Paul to play a unique role in joining a growing global consensus of international stakeholders around the world who are rejecting India's draconian Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and are horrified at India's turn to genocide.

On April 28, 2020, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), that makes policy recommendations to the US Government, has called on the US State Department to place India in a list of "countries of particular concern," based on a sharp uptick in violations of human rights and religious freedom in India. On the subject of the CAA and the National Registry of Citizens (NRC), both deeply repressive moves that caused convulsions across Indian society in the form of mass protests, USCIRF noted that these were poised to put citizenships of millions into question, but "Muslims alone would bear the indignities and consequences of potential statelessness".

The anti-Muslim citizenship laws of India are reminiscent of Nazi Germany's anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws that had disenfranchised millions of Jews and laid the path for the Holocaust. There are numerous reports by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and many other organizations that paint a disturbing picture of a polity in India that is complicit in mass violation of human rights and religious freedom. Unfortunately in India, the land of Gandhi, the purveyors of hate have actually managed to push bigotry and religious persecution as part of state policy.

Genocide is no longer a rarity, as it has occurred in just the last 40 years in Bosnia (1992), in Rwanda (1994) and in the Central African Republic (2012-13). Genocide Watch has issued two genocide alerts for India. There is really only one question we should consider with regards to this resolution, which is, what is the moral call to action in the face of genocide? Is it silence or is it action? History has shown that international condemnation is a critical tool to stopping genocidal projects.

In light of these concerns, Indian Americans who are concerned about this issue have reached out to our political leadership to stand with us during this difficult time. The CAA stands to impact many domestic issues like immigration, hate crimes, and more. That is why it is crucial for Saint Paul to take a stand against this horrific act for the many Indian minorities who live in Saint Paul who, with this bigoted act, are concerned for their religious freedom and equality in the face of a growing global Islamophobic discourse.

Millions of Indian lives hang in the balance, and this resolution is a very simple act of courage that sends a message that genocide will not be tolerated under any circumstances and that to the many Indian minorities who live in Seattle, that this corner of the world will continue to be a welcoming place, as other darker forces mobilize to polarize and incarcerate millions.

The U.S. has a special role to play in leading the moral consensus as leaders of the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), cited President Trump, the Muslim ban, and the wall as justification for the persecution against Rohingya and Indian Muslims, with one BJP leader even saying that if they saw a Rohingya they would shoot them on site.

This hateful Islamophobia and xenophobia has emboldened other nationalists around the world. That is why it is up to conscious Americans, like yourselves, who value the cherished ideals of democracy, religious freedom, human rights, and pluralism to stand up and show another world is possible.

We believe the people of Saint Paul have the moral courage to stand up to this global wave of violence, and that is why it is urgent that every council member vote yes on resolution 20-712.

We ask you to stand on the right side of history, as the council has done in the past and vote yes on this resolution and stand up to genocide. The time to act to stop a genocide is before it starts.

Sincerely,

Ashik Mohamed

Dear St Paul City Council,

I understand you have a lot on your plate right now and I understand a lot of opposition to this has been raised, but I would like to reiterate my previous email supporting this resolution. The government in India is continuing to oppress minorities even in the middle of the pandemic. Such as [imprisoning this pregnant activist](#) at great risk to her health. These are deeply troubling to those of us whose bodies are here, but whose hearts are in both places. I, along with a few others wrote this [letter](#), which we have signed with personal testimonies. The letter will be updated as more people sign on.

Best,

Siddhant

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to thank you and express my deepest gratitude and appreciation for your moral and courageous stand in defending Human Rights, Civil Liberties, and Religious Freedom across the globe by introducing resolution #20-712 that is rightly "Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste by rejecting the Bharatiya Janata Party's Islamophobic ideology, and opposing India's National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act."

I urge you to vote and adopt the resolution in its entirety. Resolution 20-712 allows Saint Paul to play a unique role in joining a growing global consensus of international stakeholders around the world who are rejecting India's draconian Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and are horrified at India's turn to genocide.

On April 28, 2020, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)*, that makes policy recommendations to the US Government, has called on the US State Department to place India in a list of "**countries of particular concern (CPC)**," based on a sharp uptick in violations of human rights and religious freedom in India. On the subject of the CAA and the National Registry of Citizens (NRC)**, both deeply

repressive moves that caused convulsions across Indian society in the form of mass protests, USCIRF noted that these were **poised to put citizenships of millions into question, but "Muslims alone would bear the indignities and consequences of potential statelessness"**.

*USCIRF India Chapter – 2020 Annual Report date 4/28/2020: <https://www.uscifr.gov/reports-briefs/annual-report-chapters-and-summaries/india-chapter-2020-annual-report>

**USCIRF Press Release dated 12/9/2019: <https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/press-releases-statements/uscifr-raises-serious-concerns-and-eyes-sanctions> &

**USCIRF Press Release dated 11/19/2019: <https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/press-releases-statements/fate-nearly-20million-in-assam-india-examined-in-new-uscifr>

The anti-Muslim citizenship laws of India are reminiscent of Nazi Germany's anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws that had disenfranchised millions of Jews and laid the path for the Holocaust. There are numerous reports by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and many other organizations that paint a disturbing picture of a polity in India that is complicit in mass violation of human rights and religious freedom. Unfortunately in India, the land of Gandhi, the purveyors of hate have actually managed to push bigotry and religious persecution as part of state policy.

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That is why it is up to conscious Americans, like yourselves, who value the cherished ideals of democracy, religious freedom, human rights, and pluralism to stand up and show another world is possible.

I believe the people of Saint Paul have the moral courage to stand up to this global wave of violence, and that is why it is urgent that **every council member vote yes on**

resolution 20-712.

I plead with you to stand on the right side of history, as the council has done in the past and vote yes on this resolution and stand up to genocide. The time to act to stop a genocide is before it starts.

Ammar Husain

Shakopee, MN

Dear Council Members.

I am writing to you to express my strong opposition to Resolution 20-712 and ask that it be tabled. In the event it is not tabled, I ask that you vote NO.

This resolution is deeply flawed, misguided, and divisive.

Resolution 20-712 not only misrepresents the people and the government of India, it also propagates misinformation about India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). In doing so, it jeopardizes the Hindu and Indian American community - a minority community that contributes significantly to the welfare and prosperity of the Twin Cities, the state of Minnesota and our great nation. Passing of this resolution will gaslight and harm the Hindu community while peddling Hinduphobia.

First, it is important to understand the CAA. This act, passed in 2019, and an extension of India's Citizenship Act of 1955, aims to fast-track the citizenship process of persecuted religious minorities (Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, etc.) of the three neighboring Islamic nations of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Also, this act is applicable only to those who fled persecution and entered India on or before December 31, 2014. This act does not, in any shape or form, alter the citizenship or rights of India's 200 million Muslims who continue to enjoy the same rights as other communities under the Constitution of India. Nor does it restrict the entry of Muslims from the Islamic nations mentioned above. Furthermore, even previous governments in India have issued calls for passing such a law – thus it is not unique to the current government and is not a sign of bigotry against Muslims and minorities.

Any statement that deviates from the above is therefore a dangerous political agenda that seeks to harm the good relations between the United States and India.

Millions of Americans support India's effort to protect persecuted religious minorities and the Saint Paul City Council should also do the same. Consider the following reasons:

(1) The persecuted minorities of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh are on the verge of near demographic extinction. They have been systemically and systematically denied a minimum standard of living. Women and children have been raped and forced into marriages, following conversion. There have been also been reports of starvation and violence during the current COVID-19 crisis. Just in March 2020, radicals from ISIS killed 25 Sikhs – including several women and one child - in Afghanistan, where the total Sikh population is only around 600.

(2) India has historically welcomed religiously persecuted minorities, much like the US, and these minorities have thrived. An especially important example is the tiny but prosperous community of Zoroastrians (Parsis) who fled Iran and made India their home a few centuries ago.

(3) The U.S. has an almost identical law to India's CAA - the Lautenberg-Specter Amendment. In fact, the great state of Minnesota, with its rich history of welcoming immigrants and refugees, is home to some 12,500 beneficiaries of this very program that benefits Jews, Evangelical Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, and Ukrainian Orthodox Christians from states of the former Soviet Union. Persecuted Baha'is, Christians, and Jews from Iran, and Indochinese nationals are also included.

(4) In December 2019, the City of St. Paul passed its own resolution "supporting the expansion of access to citizenship, lawful permanent residency, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), asylum, and other forms of immigration status and benefits" and declared that the city welcomes immigrants and refugees. In 2003, Randy Kelly, former Mayor of St. Paul, led a delegation to Thailand to welcome and help 15,000 Hmong refugees from Laos, and help them settle in Minnesota.

By passing Resolution 20-712, the city is essentially renegeing on that spirit and opining that other countries and places should not welcome severely persecuted minorities.

Secondly, the resolution is wrong on the claim that the National Registry of Citizens (NRC) will discriminate against LGBTQ people, atheists, Adivasis, Muslims, and low caste Hindus, and demonstrates the Council's complete lack of knowledge and familiarity about India. The Government of India has made clear that there is no plan for a national NRC. It has also assured that, if and when the NRC is administered, no one will be excluded on the basis of religion, gender, or caste (the latter exists in all faith communities in India, not just among Hindus). There is no basis to claim the Indian Government seeks to discriminate against LGBTQ people. In fact, the BJP led parliament passed the Transgender Protection of Rights Bill that went into effect this past January. The BJP led government also opened India's first transgender university in 2019.

The inclusion of atheists is ignorant at best and blatantly false at worst. While atheists are persecuted, even beheaded, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, India's civilizational ethos of pluralism has given rise and space to various philosophical traditions of atheism. Resolution 20-712 states that it is reaffirming the city to be "a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community." The effect, however, is the opposite. The Saint Paul City Council has single-handedly created divisions in the peaceful South Asian community by venturing into politics it knows little about, and taking cues from organizations that have a history of peddling Hinduphobia and supporting denigration of Hindu religious festivals and symbols. In doing so, it has created a hostile atmosphere for Hindu Americans in the Twin Cities. In an environment where Hindus are already facing discrimination and hatred, such resolutions add fuel to the fire, and advance anti-Hindu prejudice and bigotry that openly discounts the fact that Hindus, Sikhs and other religious minorities continue to be persecuted in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

For these reasons, we urge the Saint Paul City Council to uphold their oath, demonstrate responsible governance, and table this non-germane, factually inaccurate, and deeply divisive resolution which will cause irreparable damage to the Hindu community.

Sincerely

R Shaligram

A very concerned citizen !

TO: Council President Amy Brendmoen, Councilmember Mitra Jalali, Councilmember Rebecca Noecker, Councilmember Jane L. Prince, Councilmember Dai Thao, Councilmember Chris Tolbert, and Councilmember Nelsie Yang and

Dear Council President Brendmoen,

This letter is also faxed at 651 266 8574 because of urgency.

Earlier, I wrote to the City Council asking to TABLE the resolution 20-712 but to the best of my recollection, I have not heard. It is very disappointing that the Council is not responsive to citizen concerns. I am aware that the Council has discussed the issues related to this resolution with a group of concerned citizens following a very detailed response submitted by that group. That group, of which I am a signatory, also requested that the resolution be TABLED.

Ordinarily, the citizens can appear before the Council during live meetings and if they wish to comment, they do so. That is the democracy we cherish as individuals and as a nation. Not knowing whether the Council will TABLE the resolution on May 20, some of us have called your office to be part of the "video" live discussion in lieu of personal appearance (extraordinary situation due to COVID19). The Office was perplexed with our request and not sure how to respond or what to do?

It is URGENT that either the Council makes IMMEDIATE arrangement for us to be part of the council meeting through video network or the resolution be TABLED without further deliberation. The City should honor the democratic process and uphold the citizen's rights to partake in the discussion.

Let me assert once again that the resolution is not based on facts but a half-baked concoction with misinterpretation of CAA in India. The simplest corollary to CAA is Lautenberg Law allowing expedited Citizenship to persecuted religious minorities like Jews, Christians, and Baha'is (fleeing from Iran). In the simplest terms, the Lautenberg-Spector Amendment positively discriminates against Muslims but who am I to question the wisdom of elected lawmakers? Likewise, why the City Council is obsessed with debating a constitutionally approved CAA and that too during the unprecedented and deadly pandemic? I don't need to remind you that the millions need help for economic and emotional health challenges which must be the highest priority for the Council.

In conclusion, please TABLE the resolution but if you are obsessed to proceed with the discussion on May 20, provide us the link to the live discussion and allow us time to express our views during RES 20-712 discussion. Because of the shortness of time, please have your office call at 651 528 6763 or send an email immediately. Thank you.

Sincerely,

May 18, 2020

Vijendra Agarwal, Ph.D.

11599 Aileron Ct.

Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Vj Agarwal** <agarwalvj@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, May 11, 2020 at 2:52 PM

Subject: Resolution 20-172

To: agarwalvj <agarwalvj@gmail.com>, Vidya Gyan <vidyagyan2014@gmail.com>

Dear City Councilor,

I am a long-term proud resident of Minnesota of Indian origin. We call the greater Twin Cities home because of the vibrant, democratic, and welcoming society which respects human rights, religious freedom, and wellbeing of all individuals. The emergence of Resolution 20-172 is very disturbing indeed and I write to you again with strongest opposition and ask that it be TABLED. I can debate and write at length but respecting your time, I write to illustrate the following facts:

1. Councilwoman Jane L. Prince, one of the sponsors of the resolution, specifically referred to the demonstrations in February during President Trump's visit. I was in India at the time and watched it in real-time. Those were highly politically motivated demonstrations orchestrated by certain individuals. Truly a very unfortunate incidence causing 53 deaths among Hindus and Muslims, including a Hindu investigating Intelligent Bureau Officer. We must condemn such acts of violence anywhere. Since then, the [arrested](#) include Tahir Hussain (Aam Aadmi party councilor), Ishrat Jahan (Congress party councilor) and an activist Khalid Saifi. Please note that many innocent families suffered because of the violence and hatred fueled under the misguided leadership of Tahir Hussain; note who orchestrated- individuals of one faith representing the opposition political parties.
2. In addition, there are infamous *Shaheen Bagh* protests, orchestrated by similar political motivations to polarize the community, which inconvenienced thousands of children going to school and commuters to and from work every single day for months. The Hindu majority has not only tolerated but let the protest continue without any act of violence respecting individual right to protest under the Constitution. I want to assert that Hindus are the most tolerant, God-fearing, and law-abiding individuals. I hope that Councilor Rebecca Noecker, who spent more than a year in Pune, will positively share her own experiences and speak about the harmonious coexistence of people of different faiths. India is home to minority religions: Sikhs, Jains, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, just to name a few.

3. I strongly encourage you to read the full article: <https://myind.net/Home/viewArticle/why-dont-hindus-stand-up-against-anti-hindu-anti-india-agenda> At a minimum, allow me to cite Rep Tulsi Gabbard, US Presidential candidate, and a Hindu, how she expresses her feelings about Hinduphobia. The current resolution before the City is nothing more than an attempt to perpetrate totally unsubstantiated Hinduphobia by a group of misinformed people who want to divide our communities. We must not let that happen. I argue that the City should be spending time and precious resources of taxpayers to discuss more important issues during these uncertain and extraordinary times of COVID 19 rather than interfering in the internal affairs of the largest democracy and a natural ally of the United States. I assert that the cultural and trade relations between Minnesota and India will strengthen with your VOTE AGAINST the motion.

Here is what Rep. Gabbard says about India:

“Although India and Hindus were attacked for centuries, India maintained a peaceful environment and communal harmony, to a great extent. India is the second most populated country in the world with 1.34 billion people...in essence, four times the population of the U.S. in less-than-one-third of U.S land. You can certainly imagine the complexity India faces as a country. In comparison, the issues are managed brilliantly, and balance is restored quickly oftentimes. The recent past has been particularly difficult for the Hindus, Hinduism, and India; as we have witnessed communist media’s effort to defame, divide and weaken India.

These questions have been bothering me for a while –

1. Is there one Hindu (or a group) who stood up against blatant bias, negative narratives, defamation, and anti-Hindu and anti-India propaganda?
2. Why would U.S. Democrats, like Bernie Sanders, an ultra-leftist communist, be influenced to propagate such sick anti-India, anti-Hindu statements, directly inciting violence against Hindus worldwide?
3. How many Indian Muslims were driven out of India?
4. Why are the western media relentlessly pushing an one-sided narrative of victimhood, painting the Modi government as fascists, murderous, genocidal, xenophobic and anti-Muslim?

LET’S START WITH SOME FACTS ABOUT INDIA:

First, India is the ONLY country with the largest Muslim population outside Muslim-majority countries

Second, India holds third of world's Muslim population (10.9%), slightly behind Pakistan (11.1%) and Indonesia (12.7%) [Note, just a few years ago, India was at the second place over Pakistan]

Third, India has over 200 million Muslims - can one neighboring Islamic state provide such statistics of minorities?

Fourth, India remains a secular country. YET, the neighboring Islamic State nations (Pakistan & Bangladesh) cannot say the same

Fifth, there are 51 Islamic nations, 0 Hindu countries, 1 Jewish country, and the rest are Christian and Buddhist countries, out of 195 countries in the world

Sixth, India is a Hindu majority country with 79% Hindus and 21% minority. This percentage is retained more-or-less constant since the 1947 India-Pakistan division. Nepal was a Hindu nation at the time of monarchs, BUT not anymore - it was declared as a secular state in 2007 after abolition of it's monarchy
Seventh, Pakistan's minority number dropped from ~27% in 1947 to 2% now, and numbers fell from ~23% to 10% in Bangladesh.”

In closing, I ask that you TABLE the motion to preserve, promote, and perpetuate harmony among all irrespective of who they are, where they come from, and what faith they belong to. Our city must rise to her strength of welcoming ethnic groups of multi-faith and multicultural backgrounds. I hope that all of

you are aware of Asian Indian community, including thousands of doctors and other professionals, in supporting the larger effort in fighting the invisible and deadly COVID 19. Together we will win that fight and make our community a better place if you TABLE or at least VOTE AGAINST the resolution 20-172. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Vijendra Agarwal, Ph.D.
(Former Dean at Minnesota State University, Mankato)
11599 Aileron Ct.
Inver Grove Heights, MN 5507

"EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD"...

Nelson Mandela

Dear St. Paul city council,

This is not a form letter or email from a fake email account.

I am a Hindu American who is genuinely concerned that great city like St Paul is being emotionally taken advantage of and becoming a tool to support fake propaganda of CAIR.

Kindly ask CAIR to provide proof of any of their allegations. It's one thing to talk about liberal causes and words, it's another thing to see that India lives by those values and neighbors of India do not. Therefore there is a need to save the persecuted minorities who are butchered for being non-muslims in an islamic state.

I am so grateful that the world is sensitive to human rights. At the same time, I am disappointed that the largest democracy of the world is being misjudged based on propaganda.

I would encourage you all to back your resolution with proven facts and analysis. I assume you have read CAA. I assume you know the atrocities that are committed on Hindus, Sikhs and Christians in islamic nations. If you know all this then how can you oppose CAA?

About NRC, would you not want each country to know who lives in the country? Why would anyone need to be concerned if they are law abiding citizens. Look at the history of India. It protected all minorities from around the world.

St Paul needs to stand by the truth and not fall prey to propaganda. Please do your due diligence and then listen to logic and reason from your own analysis.

Please stand by innocent victims by supporting CAA so we can give this people dignity and respect they deserve. Muslims are not persecuted in islamic nations due to their religions. All islamic nations fight amongst themselves and kill each other. Thats a norm.

India can try to save minorities and Indian diaspora in St Paul needs to know that the leadership at city council will not yield it's righteousnes due to pressure of friendship with CAIR.

I urge you to support the truth and look for the proof of your allegations.

Thank you,
A concerned American Hindu

Dear Council members,

My name is Mohamed I Huq, I am the religious director of Muslim Community Center Bloomington, Minnesota. With tears in my eyes and a pang of pain in my heart I am appealing to good hearted and rational people like you to stand up against the carnage of humans, being carried out in India. In this case the humans are all Muslims!

Please see attached a summary of inhumane policies and steps - Narendra Modi - the Indian Prime Minister and his political party BJP is taking to wipe out Muslims in India. The Policy and the mode of Operandi looks as if it is the exact image of Nazi Germany's anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws that had disenfranchised millions of Jews and paved the path for the dreadful Holocaust. Modi and his right wing party BJP is following a systematize, barbaric, cruel and inhumane strategy to wipe all Muslims from India and bragging Holocaust would pale in comparison of what they would do to Muslims! People with morals and honor like you, should voice against such cruelty in no uncertain terms.

I would appreciate and urge you to vote and adopt the resolution #20-712 in its entirety.

Thanking you,

Sincerely,
Mohamed I Huq
Imam and Religious Director
Muslim Community Center
Bloomington, Minnesota

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to thank you and express our deepest gratitude and appreciation for your moral and courageous stand in defending Human Rights, Civil Liberties, and Religious Freedom across the globe by introducing resolution #20-712 that is rightly "Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste by rejecting the Bharatiya Janata Party's Islamophobic ideology, and opposing India's National Registry of Citizens and

Citizenship Amendment Act."

We urge you to vote and adopt the resolution in its entirety. Resolution 20-712 allows Saint Paul to play a unique role in joining a growing global consensus of international stakeholders around the world who are rejecting India's draconian Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and are horrified at India's turn to genocide.

On April 28, 2020, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)*, that makes policy recommendations to the US Government, has called on the US State Department to place India in a list of "**countries of particular concern (CPC)**," based on a sharp uptick in violations of human rights and religious freedom in India. On the subject of the CAA and the National Registry of Citizens (NRC)**, both deeply repressive moves that caused convulsions across Indian society in the form of mass protests, USCIRF noted that these were **poised to put citizenships of millions into question, but "Muslims alone would bear the indignities and consequences of potential statelessness"**.

*USCIRF India Chapter – 2020 Annual Report date 4/28/2020: <https://www.uscifr.gov/reports-briefs/annual-report-chapters-and-summaries/india-chapter-2020-annual-report>

**USCIRF Press Release dated 12/9/2019: <https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/press-releases-statements/uscifr-raises-serious-concerns-and-eyes-sanctions> &

**USCIRF Press Release dated 11/19/2019: <https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/press-releases-statements/fate-nearly-20million-in-assam-india-examined-in-new-uscifr>

The anti-Muslim citizenship laws of India are reminiscent of Nazi Germany's anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws that had disenfranchised millions of Jews and laid the path for the Holocaust. There are numerous reports by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and many other organizations that paint a disturbing picture of a polity in India that is complicit in mass violation of human rights and religious freedom. Unfortunately in India, the land of Gandhi, the purveyors of hate have actually managed to push bigotry and religious persecution as part of state policy.

Genocide is no longer a rarity, as it has occurred in just the last 40 years in Bosnia (1992), in Rwanda (1994) and in the Central African Republic (2012-13). Genocide Watch has issued two genocide alerts for India. There is really only one question we should consider with regards to this resolution, which is, what is the moral call to action in the face of genocide? Is it silence or is it action? History has shown that international condemnation is a critical tool to stopping genocidal projects.

In light of these concerns, Indian Americans who are concerned about this issue have

reached out to our political leadership to stand with us during this difficult time. The CAA stands to impact many domestic issues like immigration, hate crimes, and more. That is why it is crucial for Saint Paul to take a stand against this horrific act for the many Indian minorities who live in Saint Paul who, with this bigoted act, are concerned for their religious freedom and equality in the face of a growing global Islamophobic discourse.

Millions of Indian lives hang in the balance, and this resolution is a very simple act of courage that sends a message that genocide will not to be tolerated under any circumstances and that to the many Indian minorities who live in Seattle, that this corner of the world will continue to be a welcoming place, as other darker forces mobilize to polarize and incarcerate millions.

The U.S. has a special role to play in leading the moral consensus as leaders of the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), cited President Trump, the Muslim ban, and the wall as justification for the persecution against Rohingya and Indian Muslims, with one BJP leader even saying that if they saw a Rohingya they would shoot them on site.

This hateful Islamophobia and xenophobia has emboldened other nationalists around the world. That is why it is up to conscious Americans, like yourselves, who value the cherished ideals of democracy, religious freedom, human rights, and pluralism to stand up and show another world is possible.

We believe the people of Saint Paul have the moral courage to stand up to this global wave of violence, and that is why it is urgent that every council member vote yes on resolution 20-712.

We ask you to stand on the right side of history, as the council has done in the past and vote yes on this resolution and stand up to genocide. The time to act to stop a genocide is before it starts.

Your signature along with the Association/ Organization Stamp

Dear Ms. Burger,

I spoke to Mrs Jan Peterseon, at your office regarding the resolution RES 20-712, which has been discussed by the Council Members of the City of St Paul, for the last few days against Asian Indians in Minnesota.

I am a Minnesotan and legal resident for the past 49 years and a US citizen. And my husband came to the US in 1968, to go to graduate school at University of Minnesota Mechanical Engineering.

We have taken pride that we live in the best state of Minnesota. With good schools, colleges, communities and affordable housing. Where Mayo Clinic, Target, 3M, Medtronic, Northwest

Airlines(Delta Airline)great colleges, schools have taken birth and the immigrants have brought academics as well hard work with so much to give to enrich our state and made us all stand tall and feel proud.

Before one or few residents or citizens start a petition to paint the hard working community of Asian Indians Minnesotans and paint them as bad we should all search within ourselves. Are we really the judge without knowing that India is a largest democracy of one hundred and thirty three million people? In India everyone's religious holiday is a national holiday. We have had Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Jain, women to become Presidents, Prime Ministers and Members of Parliament, Lok Sabha. A young scientist and of Indian origin woman Dr Kalpana Chawla, went to Nasa Space Shuttle Columbia in 2003, and perished with all in the shuttle. Dr Sanjay Gupta, second generation Indian American and on CNN, chief medical doctor educates us kindly and professionally to and more they serve as judges, doctors, scientists find solutions to problems which helps us all and not just one ethnic group.

If the elected or nominated officials only try to please a few without looking at the whole picture, facts and stereotyping all of one group of ethnic minority that will be the most unfortunate decision and judgment he/she has passed to please one or two group of its citizens because they are the larger number in population and can make more noise and the elected officials are only trying to please a few. And at the same time they are going to divide and label the ones they are trying to pass the resolution against as bad people.

When we came here legally as first generation immigrants we did not ask for help from the government for housing, food stamps, tuition money and used the race card to get assistance. We worked hard and we were raised to not ask for charity but worked hard because academics was the best property one can have and no one can take away. Our children are working hard to do better than we can to be inclusive and not divided by race or religion.

Supreme Court of India, has passed several laws to protect muslim women and the laws for women. The CAA, is misused by some to divide and some of the outsiders may be using this to misguide and create unrest and chaos in the largest democracy in the world.

I want to thank Ms Jan Peterson, when I called and for listening and giving me an opportunity to express my thoughts and I am attaching a document. There are some of the laws passed by Indian Supreme Court.

Sincerely,

Shashi Gupta

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986

October 2016, Supreme Court India Judgement

Triple Talaq: Abolishing the practice will grant Muslim women divorce with dignity

[Legal ban on triple talaq](#)

[The Muslim Women \(Protection of Rights on Marriage\) Act, 2019](#) passed on 26 July 2019 after a very long discussion and opposition finally got the verdict (the Indian Supreme Court judgement of August 2017 described below) to all women. It made triple talaq(divorce) illegal in India on 1 August 2019, replacing the triple talaq ordinance promulgated in February 2019. It stipulates that instant triple talaq (talaq-e-biddah) in any form – spoken, written, or by electronic means such as email or SMS – is illegal and void, with up to three years in jail for the husband. Under the new law, an aggrieved woman is entitled to demand maintenance for her dependent children.^[13]

Muslim Law Board says women are free to pray in mosques – but most women have been told the opposite

The Law Board has admitted in the Supreme Court that Islam permits women to enter mosques. But the reality on the ground is starkly different.

January 2020, Indian Supreme Court

Muslim women permitted to enter mosques to offer namaz, AIMPLB tells SC

Muslim women like men are permitted to enter mosques for offering 'namaz', the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) told the Supreme Court Wednesday.

Last Updated: Jan 29, 2020, 10.46 PM IST

A Supreme Court bench headed by Justice Vikramjit Sen, had ruled that an unwed mother does not have to take consent from the biological father of the child, or reveal his identity for sole guardianship of the child. The Delhi High Court has ruled that using the mother's name is sufficient for a child to apply for a passport when the child is being brought up by a single mother without any involvement from the father.

Read more at: <https://yourstory.com/2016/05/custody-rights-divorce>



Hindu Community Center

10530 Troy Lane North
Maple Grove, MN 55311
501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

Date: 13 May 2020

Subject: Rejection of RES 20-712 by Prominent Citizens of the Indian American Community of Minnesota

Dear City Council Members of St. Paul, MN

We are a group of long-term residents of the Twin Cities and are prominent members of the Indian and Hindu American Communities of Minnesota. We are writing to you to express our collective dismay at RES 20-712 proposed by the St. Paul City Council for a vote on May 20, 2020.

It is our considered opinion that the tone and the content of this Resolution promotes misunderstanding and marginalization of our community, puts us in the way of harm, and distracts from our city's collective fight against the ongoing Pandemic.

This past April, city council members introduced RES 20-621 that rightly condemned acts of racism directed against our fellow Americans - immigrants from the Asian and Pacific Islander communities residing in our state, who were being blamed unfairly for the Covid-19 Pandemic. The current RES 20-712 is opposite in its essential nature and impact. It injects divisive overseas politics into Minnesota and thereby endangers the safety and well-being of people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities by creating a hostile environment for us and creating fault lines within the community. We know that the City Council strives for peace and friendship in our community. This resolution achieves the opposite.

We urge you to withdraw RES 20-712 or vote against its passage for the following main reasons:

- 5. It mis-states facts that are easily verifiable. Inaccurate declarations are made worse with incendiary language.**
- 6. It divides our local communities along religious and political lines at a time when we need to fight the Covid-19 Pandemic unitedly. The Resolution unnecessarily injects divisive overseas politics into local concerns.**
- 7. It endangers Indian Americans residing in Minnesota by falsely implying that their homeland is becoming some version of the Third Reich. Most Indian Americans here are first generation immigrants with strong family ties in India. The resolution makes them appear as racists and religious bigots. It also affects their relationship with family members back in India.**
- 8. It diminishes the valuable contributions of the Indian American community to Minnesota and undermines the healthy relationship between the two largest democracies in the world.**

In **Appendix A** of this letter, we provide a Fact Check as 'Clarifications' for the various erroneous assertions made in RES 20-712 so that you get a correct and informed perspective.

There are 50,000 people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities. They are outstanding members of the community, contributing to a variety of notable sectors, including but not limited to healthcare, bio-technology and engineering, entrepreneurship, education, tourism and food service, retail etc. Numerous Indian, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh community organizations in Minnesota are volunteering tirelessly to serve other Minnesotans during the ongoing Pandemic. We wish to emphasize that **when a city council paints an entire country in broad and factually dubious strokes, it reflects negatively on all people of Indian origin, and especially on Hindus Americans who reside in Minnesota as fellow Americans. It also promotes Hinduphobia.**

Indian businesses have made a significant investment in the Twin Cities and are creating jobs for Minnesotans. According to a study by the Confederation of Indian Industry, Minnesota has attracted more than \$1.8 billion and created 2,500 jobs as a direct result of investment from India-based companies, ranking Minnesota third among American states in Indian investment dollars. Several Indian companies are doing business in Minnesota: TATA Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro, and ITC Infotech are in the IT and telecom industry; Essar in the materials and manufacturing sector. Twin Cities based businesses also have significant and mutually beneficial investments in India. For example, Cargill began a five-year investment plan of \$240M in 2017 intended to improve food safety and economic development and benefit the food processing and agriculture industries. 3M is heavily invested in India for over 30 years now. Target Corporation and Medtronic Ltd (with its major operations run from Fridley, MN) are other examples of companies with a broad footprint in India.

This resolution diminishes and disregards the deep economic relationship between Minnesota and India and demeans the worth of Indian Americans in our state as fellow Americans. The two organizations who have drafted this resolution do not fully represent their own communities, let alone South Asians or even Indian Americans as a whole. In the coming years, the governments of the United States of America and India are expected to coordinate closely to fight this Pandemic. It is pertinent to note here that the largest vaccine producing company in India is owned by an Indian minority citizen.

Below is a list of individuals who endorse the contents of this letter (along with the Appendix). Their affiliations, *while not reflective of institutional endorsements*, give you an indication of their stellar community service to the several prominent institutions that they have founded and nurtured in our esteemed state. You have heard from some of our community organizations. Through this letter, our intent is to convey how RES 20-712 has deeply troubled us as *individual* Americans. The country of our origin has been tarred with crude and broad strokes without even a basic fact check, thereby making us feel otherized and unwelcome in a state that we have called home and contributed to for decades.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shashikant Sane

Co-Founder and Ex Chairperson, Hindu Society of Minnesota;
Founder and President, Hindu Community Center;
Founding Physician, Children's Hospital of Minneapolis

List of Endorsing Individuals in Alphabetical Order (Affiliation Stated for Identification Only):

Dr. Vijendra Agarwal

Former Dean, Minnesota State University, Mankato
President and Co-founder, Vidya Gyan www.vidya-gyan.org

Mr. Vishal Agarwal

Advisory Board Member, Hindu American Foundation <https://www.hinduamerican.org/>
Trustee Executive Council, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Mr. Kaustubh Alegaonkar

Education Chair, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://sites.google.com/site/hsmneducation/>

Mrs. Sushumna Aggarwal

Ex BOD, Diversity Endowment Fund (Asia Pacific Endowment), St. Paul
<https://www.spmcf.org/nonprofits/grants-for-nonprofits/diversity-endowment-fund>
Past President, The Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Dr. Kumar G. Belani

Professor of Anesthesiology, Division Head, Clinical Chief & Pediatric Anesthesiologist-In-Chief, M Health Fairview Masonic Children's Hospital
Adjunct Professor in Medicine & Pediatrics and Environmental Health Sciences, Schools of Medicine & Public Health; Distinguished International Professor, AHC
University of Minnesota

Mr. Arun Bhargava

Coordinator, Sunday Sermons, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Mrs. Raj Choudhary

Executive Director, Sewa-Aifw – Asian Indian Family Wellness <https://sewa-aifw.org/>

Dr. Sitakant Dash

Chairperson, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>
BOD, Indian Association of Minnesota <https://iamn.org/>
Founder President, Dr. Dash Foundation <http://drdashfoundation.com/>

Mr. Kuldeep Dhar, Entrepreneur

BOD, Hindu Community Center of Minnesota

Dr. Vijay B Dixit

Founder and Chairman, Shreya R Dixit Memorial Foundation for Distraction-free Driving
<https://shreyadixit.org/>
Member of State of Minnesota Commissioner's Task Force for Teen Driver Safety
Author: 'One Split Second' (A book on Distracted Driving Epidemic)

Mr. Ranjan Dumra, Entrepreneur

CEO, Diverse Maintenance Solutions, Inc. <https://dmsimn.com/>

President, Sveda Organics, Inc. <https://svedaorganics.com/>

Mr. Ram Gada

Honorary BOD, Indian Association of Minnesota <https://iamn.org/>

Founder, Jain Community Center of Minnesota <https://jaincentermn.org/>

Trustee Executive Council, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Honorary Council Member, Minnesota Historical Society <https://www.mnhs.org/>

Mrs. Shashi Gupta

Past Vice President and President, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Chair of Advisory Board, Asia Pacific Endowment/ St. Paul Foundation

<https://www.spmcf.org/nonprofits/grants-for-nonprofits/diversity-endowment-fund>

Election Judge for St Paul- Ramsey County for mid-term/Federal elections since 2007

Nominated by Rowzat Shipchandler to serve on Racial Equity panel at the 75th yr celebration of the St. Paul Foundation in 2015

Dr. Manu Madhok

Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Minnesota

Attending Physician, Emergency Department, Children's Minnesota

Ex-Secretary, Chinmaya Mission Twin Cities <http://chinmaya-twincities.org/cmtcwp/>

Mrs. Bhakti Modi

Administrator, Hindu American Temple School (under HSMN)

<https://sites.google.com/site/hatshsmn/>

World Hindu Council of American Youth Leader <https://www.vhp-america.org/>

Neha Markanda

Co-Founding Teacher, Hindu American Temple School <https://sites.google.com/site/hatshsmn/>

Strategic Planning Chair, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Dr. Ned Mohan

Oscar A. Schott Professor, Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering, U of Minnesota

Member of National Academy of Engineering; Fellow IEEE

Dr. Ramaiah Muthyala

Research Associate Professor

Department of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology

University of Minnesota

Mr. Godan Nambudiripad

Ex-President, Indian Association of Minnesota <https://iamn.org/>

Ex President, School of Indian Languages & Culture, St. Paul

<https://sites.google.com/site/silcminnesota/home>

Mr. Mahendra Nath, Entrepreneur

CEO & President, Nath Companies <https://nathcompanies.com/who-we-are/owners/>

Owner of numerous Hotels and other Businesses in Minnesota

Ramesh Noone

Chair of Public Relations Committee, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Ms. Ekta Prakash

Executive Director and Chair, Sewa-Aifw BOD <https://sewa-aifw.org/>

Works for welfare of refugees and immigrants

Mr. Sunil Puri

The Geeta Ashram (Brooklyn Park, MN) <https://geetaashrammn.org/>

US-IMPACT: MN President

Dr. Kumud Sane

Co-Founder and Ex-Chairperson, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Dr. Shashikant Sane

Co-Founder and Ex-Chairperson, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

Founder and President, Hindu Community Center of Minnesota

<https://www.facebook.com/hccminnesota/>

Founding Physician, Children's Hospital of Minneapolis

Mrs. Vallabha Tantry

Immediate Past President, Hindu Society of Minnesota <https://hindumandirmn.org/>

MN Volunteer, World Hindu Council of America <https://www.vhp-america.org/>

Dr. Prabhat Tekriwal

Ex-President, Minnesota Hindu Milan Mandir <https://www.facebook.com/MNMilanMandir/>

APPENDIX A: Fact Check and Clarifications of Clauses contained in Resolution 20-712

Our Fact Check is provided as 'CLARIFICATION'

Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste by rejecting the Bharatiya Janata Party's Islamophobic ideology, and opposing India's National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act.

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council supports universal human rights for all peoples, and opposes discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity, race, and religion; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul has adopted a number of resolutions expressing solidarity with all members of our community, including most recently Resolution 20-621, "Condemning xenophobia and racism against Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in the City of Saint Paul"; which was unanimously approved on April 8, 2020; and

CLARIFICATION: Resolution 20-621 rightfully dealt with a local issue of relevance, whereas RES 20-712 deals with an issue pertaining to foreign policy that:

5. wades into an arena that the authors have no subject matter expertise;
6. promotes numerous misstatements of facts and harmful stereotypes;
7. endangers the safety and well-being of people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities by creating a hostile environment for local residents and creating fault lines within the community; and
8. takes away the focus from fight the Covid-19 Pandemic

WHEREAS, the nation of India was founded as a secular republic in which members of all nationalities, ethnicities, races, and religious faiths are welcome, and India and the US share a common bond through democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and liberty; and

CLARIFICATION: Even though 80% of India's population is and has been Hindu, it was founded as a secular nation at the time of Partition. That said, India has adopted a peculiar interpretation of "secular" which insists on non-establishment of religion, but not a separation of religion and state. What this has translated to is a state in which Indian Christians and Muslims have their own religion-based family laws, which very often work to the detriment of women, and complete autonomy over their faith-based institutions.

Hindu institutions, on the other hand, are required to endure government interference and control at both the state and national levels, leading to situations where non-Hindu political administrators and appointees exert control over and interfere in the management of Hindu institutions, and such institutions fall prey to mismanagement and disrepair due to political corruption, amongst other challenges to freedom of religion of Hindus.

Please note that the point of providing this context is so that council members understand that India's interpretation of secularism is unlike that of ours here in the US, and that this interpretation has harmed Hindus and interfered in their religious freedom, in spite of them being a national, not state level, majority.

Indian Americans affirm that one of the Fundamental Rights in the Constitution of India gives special rights to linguistic, religious and other minorities that are not necessarily extended to the majority community. In contrast, RES 20-712 is entirely and only about Indian Muslims. By implication, it grossly misrepresents other communities in India and as well as immigrants from these communities residing in the Twin Cities.

WHEREAS, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is dominated by the exclusionary ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (National Volunteers Association), which promotes discrimination against Muslims; and

CLARIFICATION: The BJP in its [campaign platform](#), specifies a commitment to “empowerment and the ‘development with dignity’ of all minorities (Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains and Parsis, etc..)” It also includes a promise of inclusive development that would benefit historically disadvantaged castes, tribal people, women, children, the elderly, and transgender people. Most, if not all of the government development programs have benefited these communities.

2019 saw the highest election turnout, even surpassing previous high in 2014. Of the 900 million Indians eligible to vote, approximately 600 million cast their votes -- that's a 67% turnout. BJP won by a landslide, winning 303 seats (353 for the entire coalition), which is more than the 272 seats required for a majority. The party earned the votes of women, young people, historically disadvantaged castes, and religious minorities (½ of Parliamentary seats in minority-concentrated areas). In short, hundreds of millions across all genders, religions, and castes voted for the winning coalition in a largely peaceful and democratic election. Your remarks therefore unfairly indict the largest democracy in the world and its citizens.

By your incendiary and inaccurate description of the BJP, you are insinuating that the millions of Indians who voted for the BJP promote discrimination against Muslims. This is an unfair indictment of friends and relatives of Minnesotans of Indian origin, many of whom, given the large numbers voting for the BJP, likely voted for the party. The Resolution also by extension implies that we too are related to bigots.

You should also understand that the Indian usage of the term “nationalist” is the equivalent of “patriotic” or “civic nationalism” as opposed to the Western and European usage and history of “ethnic nationalism.”

Once again, we provide this context so that the Council members do not uncritically see a foreign country through their own ethnocentric lenses.

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2019, the Indian parliament under the leadership of the BJP government and Prime Minister Modi passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which claims to help refugees fleeing religious persecution from neighboring countries, but which discriminates against Muslims by excluding millions of Muslims who have come to India to flee wars in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and other Muslim countries; and

CLARIFICATION: The BJP constitutes 54% of the Indian Parliament's lower house (equivalent of the US House) and 35% of its upper house (equivalent of the US Senate). The law was passed by an overwhelming majority (80%) of the lower house and 55% of the upper house, indicating broad-based support beyond BJP and its political allies. The law was then granted assent by the President of India. To download the official copy of CAA, click the Government of India website here -- <http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2019/214646.pdf>

The CAA does not change citizenship laws or other immigration laws, nor does it change the rights of Indian Muslims. Any non-Indian Muslims are able to emigrate to India through any legal channels. A recent and high-profile example, in fact, is that of the famous and hugely popular singer Adnan Sami, an Afghan whose father was actually a pilot in the Pakistani Air Force, who was granted Indian citizenship after the CAA was passed.

The Citizenship Amendment (CAA) removes substantial barriers to legal resettlement and citizenship by offering amnesty and a reduced residency requirement for naturalization to religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who sought shelter in India on or before December 31, 2014 due to religious persecution in their native countries. The law serves refugees who are Buddhists, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, not just Hindus. Please also note that a large number of Hindus and Christians fleeing Pakistan are from Dalit or "scheduled caste" communities.

Numerous petitions against the passage of CAA have been submitted to the Supreme Court of India. It has twice refused to stay the law. The Indian Judiciary are not political appointees, unlike in the United States and has earned a reputation of being fiercely independent. The democratic institutions of India are robust and we trust that the law will take its own course.

The horrific human rights conditions of religious minorities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan is well documented. Religious minorities there face institutional, social, and religious persecution, and are not well served in these three nations which have privileged Islam as their official state religion. In all three countries religious minorities have seen demographic declines to the point of near extinction. Please educate yourself on the human rights conditions of Afghan, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani religious minorities, and the approximately 30,000 refugees who sought shelter in India and who the CAA seeks to help. The Hindu American Foundation has been publishing reports documenting the conditions of Hindus and other minorities in these three countries for the past 16 years. They also work directly with some of these refugee communities, providing desperately needed medical assistance in Western India. <https://www.hinduamerican.org/projects/human-rights-report>

Here are some verifiable statistics:

- **Afghanistan:** The decadal census numbers indicate that since 1980, only 200 Hindu and Sikh families remain in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan of the original 200,000 individuals. Just two months ago, 29 Sikhs of the last surviving members of the community were killed by ISIS and a day later, their funeral procession was also attacked by militants. Now leaders of political parties who previously opposed the CAA

are requesting the Indian government to evacuate Hindus and Sikhs to India. Unfortunately, the matter is, however, sub-judice.

The St. Paul City Council should consider joining the call of Hindu Americans and Sikh Americans to the US Senate to expand the Lautenberg Amendment (see below) and provide refuge to Hindus and Sikhs still suffering in Afghanistan.

- **Bangladesh:** In the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh, minorities (Buddhists, Christians and Hindus) have fallen from 28% in 1941 to 10.5% in 2011. Further, while Bangladesh is taking in Rohingyas from Myanmar, it continues to marginalize its own minorities by force and through laws like the 'Enemy Property Act,' whereby widespread land grabs against minorities are allowed with impunity and without reprieve.
- **Pakistan:** Non-Muslims comprise a bare 3.6% of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's population, down from 21% in 1941.

In Pakistan, some 25 Hindu and Christian women and girls are kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam every month. Many are underage. These mostly young women are forced into marriages with men two to three times older or sold into sex trafficking. Christians, as well as Hindus, also face violence and murder when accused, even if falsely, of blasphemy.

In January 2020, a Muslim mob attacked the revered shrine of Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. The mob wanted to take away the daughter of the chief priest of the shrine, who had been earlier rescued from her captors and married off to a Muslim man. Pakistan punishes blasphemy and apostasy by death. Mere allegations result in minority members being lynched by Muslims. Right within the Twin Cities, there are religious minorities of Pakistani origin, but they are afraid to speak up for fear of their family members' safety back home. for the safety of their family members back home.

Lastly, there are NO WARS happening in Bangladesh, therefore, there are not millions or even hundreds of thousands of Muslims fleeing Bangladesh for that reason.

The wars that happened and are happening in Afghanistan as a result of the former Soviet Union, the United States, the Mujahadeen, the Taliban, ISIS, and others, have created a humanitarian crisis that has left Afghanistan holding a 32 year title of country producing the most refugees. Almost 95% of these refugees have fled to Pakistan and Iran. Hindus and Sikhs from Afghanistan have mostly fled to India, as it is their only safe haven in the region. The CAA, which the authors of this resolution ignorantly condemn, seeks to address the refugees stateless-ness.

The authors should ask this pertinent question: If CAIR is an honest broker of human rights of South Asians, why did it not insist that the resolution also highlight the ongoing atrocities against religious minorities in these three Islamic states in South Asia?

WHEREAS, the New York Times reported on December 22, 2019 that "The Indian home minister, Amit Shah, has vowed in speeches to expand the checks used in Assam to other states and then use the citizenship law to purge India of 'infiltrators' and 'termites'"; and

CLARIFICATION: The political rhetoric of India's Home Minister is indeed unfortunate and worthy of censure. That said, we do not think that our city should advise a foreign government on what to do with 10 to 20 million migrants who have not only entered India illegally, but many have also fraudulently obtained voting registrations allowing them to vote without any status whatsoever.

Illegal voting of this kind has disenfranchised actual citizens, and more importantly, indigenous people of the State of Assam, many of whom are members of protected tribes similar to Minnesota's Ojibwe, Chippewa, Lower Sioux, and others. These tribes deserve to have their sacred lands and unique cultures protected and require a voice in representative governance.

We hardly have our own country in order with regard to a fair and functional immigration system or adequate ways in which we respect, empower, or provide reparations to the original and indigenous people of this land, which we all have claimed as our own. City council time and resources would be better spent resolving some of these issues rather than casting stones.

WHEREAS, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship; and

CLARIFICATION: To reiterate, the CAA does not change citizenship or other immigration laws, nor does it impact the rights of India's 200 million Muslims, who enjoy all the freedoms that only secular democracies like India can offer their diverse citizenry. Even respected leaders of the [opposition party have affirmed](#) this fact.

Nations routinely create exceptions to rules to address pressing humanitarian crises.

Consider an American law that is strikingly similar to India's CAA - the Lautenberg-Specter Amendment. The Lautenberg Amendment creates a carve out, a reduced evidentiary burden, for select religious minorities from certain countries. In fact, our great state, with its rich history of welcoming immigrants and refugees, is home to some 12,500 beneficiaries of this very program that benefits Jews, Evangelical Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, and Ukrainian Orthodox Christians from states of the former Soviet Union. Persecuted Baha'i, Christians, and Jews from Iran, and Indochinese nationals are also included.

In the past, the US created special programs benefiting Cuban fleeing communism. Similarly, India passed temporary measures to take in over a million Sri Lankan Tamils, while excluding Sri Lankan Sinhalese. It has also welcomed Tibetan Chinese, including His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, to the exclusion of Han Chinese.

The idea that India be a refuge for religious minorities who were unable to leave West and East Pakistan (modern day Bangladesh) once the borders were drawn and the country split into three, originated during the time of Partition. Mahatma Gandhi raised the issue once the decision was made by the British to partition India into secular India and Islamic East and West Pakistan as there was concern even back then about the well-being of non-Muslims in a country being created on the basis of religion.

Recently the Muslim governor of the State of Kerala, Chief Minister Arif Mohammad Khan, [reminded critics](#) of this 70 year old promise.

WHEREAS, in 2019, the BJP government conducted a census of Assam state, that required registration of all persons in Assam in the National Register of Citizens (NRC),

requiring over two million Bengali Muslims to produce documents proving they were Indian citizens before 1971 or face detention in “foreigner” detention prisons that the Indian government has begun to build and fill; and

CLARIFICATION: This is inaccurate. The National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam was conducted on the orders of the Supreme Court of India (India too has three independent branches of government) at the conclusion of a court case filed by residents of Assam that dates back to a time when the Congress Party was in power (before 2014). The National Democratic Alliance, of which BJP is a major partner, unsuccessfully requested the Supreme Court for an extension to carry out the herculean task of accounting for over 30 million people. The first NRC exercise thus unfortunately failed. A second NRC was again hurriedly carried out, resulting in the exclusion of two million people.

According to newspaper reports, the majority were likely Hindu Bengalis. The government, however, has yet to release any information or data regarding religious affiliation. In the absence of verifiable data, the claim that two million Muslims alone were impacted is serious conjecture on the part of the authors. Moreover, the process has been stayed.

Much has been written in sensationalist media about the so called ‘detention centers.’ The fact of the matter is that there are a mere 6 such centers of which 3 predate 2014, when the BJP coalition came to power. All these can collectively hold a mere 2000 individuals, a far cry from the 20 million that is being implied. In fact, we cannot even understand how a 200 million strong community can be marginalized.

WHEREAS, many Indians lack documentation such as birth certificates to prove citizenship, and a nationwide expansion of the NRC could strip hundreds of millions of people (especially Muslims, oppressed castes, poor women, indigenous groups known collectively as Adivasi, and LGBTQ communities) of their Indian citizenship; and

CLARIFICATION: The Government of India has made clear that there is [no plan for a national NRC](#). It has also assured that if and when any NRC is administered, no one will be excluded on the basis of religion, gender, or caste (the latter which exists in all faith communities in India, not just Hindu).

The authors clearly have little understanding of the sheer diversity of Indians and did little to no fact-checking of the listing of groups provided by CAIR and IAMC that would allegedly be impacted should India ever conduct the legally mandated accounting of its citizenry, which the young democracy has never undertaken.

Muslims: First, Muslims are not a monolith. There is a rich diversity especially amongst Indian Muslims, in part due to India’s ethos of religious pluralism which has enabled a variety of Muslim sects, many of which are actually discriminated against in Muslim-majority countries, to flourish.

Second, the Council, by only mentioning Muslims, demonstrates a callous disregard for the millions of Indians of other faith and socio-economic backgrounds who also would lack documentation. Is it the intent of the St. Paul Council to endorse the rights of only one faith group over that of others, because that is what this resolution implies.

Oppressed Castes: Which oppressed castes are the authors referring to? There are poor, so-called “upper castes” who lack proper documentation, as there are wealthy, so-called “low castes” who lack proper documentation. People of a certain age may not have proper

documentation. People born in rural towns may not have documentation. Indian social groupings and their respective access to documentation is just not that simple. These “oppressed classes” are making progress. Yes, in an ideal world we would like it to happen immediately.

Please also note that both the current President of India, the Honorable Ram Nath Kovind and the Prime Minister, the Honorable Narendra Modi, belong to historically disadvantaged classes, in other words, “oppressed castes” – ‘Scheduled Caste’ community and ‘Other Backward Caste’ respectively.

Adivasis: Practically all Adivasi communities of India are unique to the country and considered indigenous to specific regions within India wherein they live either as forest dwellers or as tribal communities. For example, members of Gond, Baiga, Toda, Sarna, Garo, Khasi, and many other tribes are found only in India, therefore, it is impossible to declare them as foreigners. The word “Adivasi” means inhabitant from the earliest times or from the beginning.

Furthermore, most members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (of which Adivasi is one grouping) have government certificates which are required to access affirmative action benefits specifically for these communities. The suggestion, therefore, that Adivasis would face some undue hardship over and above that of others contradicts the ground reality.

LGBTQ: There is no basis to claim the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seeks to discriminate against LGBTQ people. In fact, the BJP led parliament passed the Transgender Protection of Rights Bill that went into effect this past January. The Humsafar Trust, the largest and one of the oldest LGBTQ groups in India has had to cancel its annual parade to dissociate itself from the appropriation by anti-CAA campaigners. Please see a co-founder of this trust, Mr. Ashok Row Kavi, who has [repeatedly posted his support](#) for the CAA on social media.

Atheists: In an introductory note, the authors had likewise added atheists as a victim of CAA/NRC, further demonstrating the lack of subject matter expertise or even basic understanding of India and its sheer religious and cultural diversity. While atheists are persecuted, even beheaded, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, India's civilizational ethos of pluralism has given rise and space to various philosophical traditions of atheism. Major Indian religions like Jainism and Buddhism are either atheist or agnostic. Millions of followers of these faiths, as well as others who are atheists, live in India without any persecution. Some of our own family members are atheists and the core Hindu principle of religious pluralism and freedom compels us to accept their right to dissent.

WHEREAS, the condition of losing citizenship is known as statelessness, and people who are stateless have no access to the rights that a nation guarantees its citizens, which in India are stipulated in Part III of India's constitution: the right to equality, right to freedom, right against exploitation, right to freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and right to constitutional remedies; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations has defined statelessness as a condition so horrific that a campaign has been launched to eradicate statelessness in the world by the year 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens will, either intentionally or otherwise, create additional stateless people in the world; and

CLARIFICATION: To reiterate a third time, the CAA does not change citizenship laws or other immigration laws, nor does it change the rights of Indian Muslims.

In fact, it seeks to address the legal status of **some 30,000 stateless individuals in India** -- individuals who are religious minorities from the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, who fled religious persecution in their home countries and sought refuge in India on or before December 31, 2014. The St. Paul City Council should be celebrating India's move.

Additionally, NRC does not exist. That the St. Paul City Council is criticizing a non-existent law further highlighting its complete lack of subject matter expertise.

WHEREAS, protests in India against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in December 2019 were met by fatal fire with live ammunition, arrests of thousands, and destruction by mobs and police of Muslim homes in cities such as Bijnor, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Sambhal, Firozabad, and Rampur; and

CLARIFICATION: The authors once again show callous disregard for non-Muslims, by erasing the Hindu and Sikh lives that were lost to some of these violent protests. This makes it appear that peaceful Muslim protestors were attacked by a uniformly Hindu police and mobs. Although there were violent protests in other states as well, all the cities in this statement are incidentally located in a single state of India ruled by the BJP that has an 80% majority in the state government – indicating the political agendas of the sponsors of this resolution. There were similar incidents in other states as well. The protests were often violent due to which it was the mobs that were controlled by police when they were attacked by protestors hurling rocks and firing guns, burning buses, trains, attacking Hindu homes etc. Note that all these protests had begun dying down before the Covid-19 finally brought to an end the last stronghold in New Delhi. There are plenty of [YouTube videos](#) that council members can see for themselves and determine if these protests uphold or align with democratic principles.

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council intends to convey dissent against President Trump and the United States for failure to censure the Indian government for not protecting all Indian residents equally; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council believes it is the duty of ordinary people to oppose the dangerous rise of racist, nationalist, and authoritarian leaders around the world, and believes that the Islamophobic authoritarianism of the Indian government in nuclear-armed India is of grave concern, not only to the 200 million Muslims in India, and to oppressed castes, women, indigenous, and LGBTQ people in India, but also to Saint Paul's South Asian immigrant community and to democratic government in the United States and around the world; and

CLARIFICATION: This clause, with its usage of strong and overtly accusatory language, just worsens the numerous factually inaccurate claims made throughout and compounds the offensiveness and potential damage this resolution has caused to tens of thousands of Minnesotans of Indian origin.

Given the fact that India is the largest democracy, and the BJP led alliance earned an overwhelming and landslide victory, the St. Paul City Council seems to be suggesting that those Indians, many of whom are close friends and relatives of tens of thousands of Minnesotans of Indian origin, who voted for the BJP or support the Government of India's move to provide refuge to persecuted religious minorities from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan are not "ordinary people" and are all racists, especially when this clause is read in the same context as another clause making a sloppy comparison to India with Nazi Germany.

Have the authors even paused to think both logically and logistically about the accusation it has lodged in this resolution with regard to 200 million Indian Muslims. After six years of the BJP in power, there have been no changes made to the fundamental rights of equality and religious freedom granted by India's Constitution or to India's citizenship and nationality laws (which do not discriminate on the basis of religion). Geographically, India is slightly more than one-third the size of the US and home to 1.35 Billion people. So in the absence of any major legal changes or physical space, are the authors of the resolution really suggesting that India is going to harm and render stateless a group of people equivalent to 60% of the American population.

This, of course, ignores the core principle rooted in the spirituality of India's 1.05 billion Hindus -- that of religious pluralism and religious freedom. It ignores the personal relationships and friendships that millions of Hindus and Muslims may have on the ground or the businesses they might have built and share, or the dozens of dargahs across the country, the tombs of Sufi saints, at which both Hindus and Muslims across India worship.

Please also note that there is no basis to this clause's suggestion that the CAA and the non-existent NRC would also lead to discrimination against women. It doesn't. The current government in India has appointed its first ever woman Finance Minister as well as its Defense Minister

Perhaps the council members do not realize that the wording of their resolution results in the conclusion that India is marginalizing everyone except its 7-8% upper caste Hindu male population and that 92-93% Indians are going to become 'stateless, scapegoated and targeted for discrimination, violence, and the abrogation of universal rights'. This is possible only in dictatorships, not in a country of 1.35 billion citizens that has been a robust democracy for decades.

WHEREAS, the Indian American Muslim Council and The Council on American-Islamic Relations and hundreds of activists and organizers have spoken out against the CAA and NRC;and

CLARIFICATION: The resolution is wrong on the claim that the National Registry of Citizens (NRC) will discriminate against LGBTQ people, atheists, Muslims, and low caste Hindus, and demonstrates the complete lack of knowledge and familiarity its authors have about India. Again, the Government of India has made clear that there is no plan for a national NRC. It has also assured that if and when any NRC is administered, no one will be excluded on the basis of religion, gender, or caste (the latter which exists in all faith communities in India, not just Hindu).

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council believes that India's Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens are inconsistent with the democratic values of the City of Saint Paul, and these Indian laws are threats to Saint Paul's South Asian communities of all castes and religions; and

CLARIFICATION: It is in fact RES 20-712 that is a threat to Indian and Hindu Americans in Minnesota. It has created a hostile environment for members of these communities, forcing them to have to dispel the many misstatements of facts about their country of origin and by implication, their friends and relatives, and stereotypes perpetuated about India and Hindus by this resolution's authors.

WHEREAS, the novel coronavirus is galvanizing the bigotry and violence against religious minorities in India and Saint Paul's South Asian community and have resulted in the Auschwitz Institute on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities issuing a warning to all governments of the world to be proactive in preventing violence and discrimination against religious and other minorities; and

CLARIFICATION: The suggestion that India is becoming a version of Third Reich by alluding to an institute named after Auschwitz is factually baseless and harmful to the safety of Minnesotans of Indian origin, especially as the country endeavors to provide refuge to some 30,000 persecuted and stateless Afghan, Bangladesh, and Pakistani religious refugees.

Raising "genocide" also betrays the [historical realities](#) of the region. Considering the war between then East and West Pakistan, which ended with the creation of Bangladesh, also resulted in the 1971 genocide of an estimated 2 million [majority Hindu Bengalis](#). Rape was used as a tool of war on a mass scale for the first time in modern history, with some 200,000 mostly Hindu women held captive in rape camps there for close to a year.

WHEREAS, according to the US Department of State, bilateral trade between the US and India exceeded \$142 billion in 2018, and according to the Star Tribune, exports from Minnesota to India were \$203.8 million in 2011; and

CLARIFICATION: There are 50,000 people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities. They are outstanding members of the community, contributing to a variety of notable sectors, including but not limited to healthcare, bio-tech and engineering, entrepreneurship, education, tourism and food service, retail. Numerous Indian community organizations in Minnesota are volunteering hard to serve other Minnesotans. **When a city council paints an entire country in broad and factually dubious strokes, it reflects on all people of Indian origin, and especially on Hindus Americans.**

Indian businesses have made a significant investment in the Twin Cities and are creating jobs for Minnesotans. According to a study by the Confederation of Indian Industry, Minnesota has attracted more than \$1.8 billion and created 2,500 jobs as a direct result of investment from India-based companies, ranking Minnesota third among American states in Indian investment dollars. Several Indian companies are doing business in Minnesota: TATA Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro and ITC Infotech are in the IT and telecom industry; Essar in the materials and manufacturing sector. Twin Cities based businesses also have significant, mutually beneficial investments in India. For example, Cargill began a five-year investment plan of \$240M in 2017 intended to food safety and economic development and benefit the food processing and agriculture industries. 3M is heavily invested in India for over 30 years now.

WHEREAS, the economic relationship including trade, manufacturing, and technical support between the US and India is threatened by the instability of civil unrest due to the Indian government's exclusionary ideology; and

CLARIFICATION: In the midst of the global pandemic, the US and a number of other countries are cooperating with India. And in the next couple of years, India is expected to play a leading role in the development and production of vaccines to prevent this disease. The largest vaccine producing company in India is also owned by a member of the minority community. At a time when we all need to be united and support the heroic effort of nations like India in fighting this unseen enemy, it is appalling that our city council should choose to issue a false indictment that is patronizing, mean-spirited and verifiably inaccurate.

WHEREAS, Saint Paul's business, residents and economy could be impacted by the continued escalating unrest in India caused by the CAA and NRC laws;

CLARIFICATION: In fact, RES 20-217 incentivizes violence by rejecting the democratic process in India and supporting political and religious groups that have resorted to violence after losing elections. There are plenty of [YouTube videos](#) that council members can see for themselves and determine if these protests uphold or align with democratic principles.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Saint Paul City Council reaffirms Saint Paul as a welcoming city and expresses solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste; and be it further

CLARIFICATION: CAIR does not represent all South Asians or even South Asian Muslims. IAM itself has had 2 Indian American Muslim presidents in the last 6 years including the immediate past President. The Saint Paul City Council has single-handedly created fissures in our community by wading into a political arena it knows little about. It has created a hostile environment for people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities by perpetuating unverified information and harmful stereotypes about Hindus that we are now forced to dispel.

RESOLVED, that the integrity of the trade relationship between the Twin Cities and India must continue to be based upon the democratic rights of our nation's peoples, the rule of law and freedom of religion, and be it further

RESOLVED, The City Council opposes the National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship Amendment Act in India, which are discriminatory to Muslims, oppressed castes, women, indigenous peoples known as Adivasi, and the LGBTQ community, and any other efforts that render vulnerable populations anywhere to become stateless, scapegoated, and targeted for discrimination, violence, and the abrogation of human rights that are universal to one and all.

Dear Ms Burger,

Please see **attached** a letter from HAF (hinduamerican.org) that highlights why the CAA was introduced, by giving a brief description of the persecution of women, LGBTQ and minorities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. RES 20-712 totally ignores this, as did of course the organizations at whose behest Ms. Jane Prince introduced this resolution.

This resolution singles out our community and our country of origin and is grounded in prejudice and stereotyping.

An example: USCIRF sent out a tweet recently criticizing Delhi Police arresting a pregnant Muslim activist. How the tweet obfuscates reality is evident from the following four simple points:

1. Delhi police has members of all religious communities. The tweet makes it appear that somehow Delhi Police is solely Hindu out to discriminate against Muslims.
2. The Lady activist was arrested not for opposing CAA but on charges of fomenting mobs to indulge in violence in northeast Delhi in late February this year based on video footage of her incendiary speeches that are easily available on the web.
3. Her pregnancy was NOT KNOWN at the time of her arrest and she concealed it (BTW, do other countries not arrest pregnant anarchists?). According to the procedures of Delhi Police, all arrested individuals are given a medical exam for their protection so that if they are hurt during the lock-up, the police can be held accountable. She refused and filed a petition in the Supreme Court of India saying that she will not undergo the exam. The Supreme Court declined, because laws apply to everyone equally.
4. The reason behind her refusal to get medically examined came out as she was found to be pregnant, and the child's father is unknown. This is a big stigma in India, and especially in the Indian Muslim community.

Now, you can see how even an organization like USCIRF indulges in false propaganda by their armchair 'country specialists' and the same propaganda then feeds organizations like CAIR who create this victimhood narrative and defame a law abiding Indian American community. Their tweet totally distorts the narrative.

We are last surviving pagan culture in the world and are proud of our heritage. We are being bullied verbally by an avalanche of falsehood by motivated and aggressive, false propaganda and RES 20-712 promotes this hate directed against us for centuries. The following article in mainstream Indian media will give you some perspective. The author's brother is Kapil Sibal, a prominent politician of the Congress I political party.

[India is no country for Islamophobia](#)



Without being secular themselves, Muslim leaders in the country constantly take shelter behind the secular India...

Please do not single us out or make us pawns in political games to get American Muslim support for Democratic politicians. MN Indian Americans are very strongly progressive and Democrats ourselves and now we are being betrayed by some who want to score political points. This is not acceptable. Our children have to pay the price of these divisive politics. I had to speak to a group of teenagers in January this year after they got scores of hateful Instagram messages telling them that their country of origin is full of Islamophobic Nazis. And then I had to AGAIN talk to my anguished students two days ago (Sunday) for the same reason. This Resolution will endanger our children further and alienate the Indian American community.

With regards,

Vishal Agarwal



Respected Council Members Dai Thao, Rebecca Noeker, Chris Tolbert, Mitra Jalali, Amy Brendmoen, Nelsie Yang and Jane Prince:

On behalf of the members of the Alliance for Persecuted Peoples Worldwide (APPWW) we are writing to express our **opposition** to the City Council's resolution 20-712, on India's Citizenship Amendment Act and their consideration of a National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The laws passed by the Government of India are an internal matter of another country and are between it and its citizens. No other country, let alone a city government has either the authority, background nor insight to sit in judgement on the internal affairs of another Sovereign Democratic Republic. The Minneapolis City Council is in violation of its ethical duties to its citizens. They elected you to help solve local problems and not use taxpayer money and time to feed your political ambitions.

The CAA and NRC are unrelated. One of them, the CAA was passed by an overwhelming majority of legislators, signed by the President of India, and reviewed by the Supreme Court of India. The other, the NRC, is something that is being discussed. It has neither been formulated nor been passed. The Government is engaged with citizens, intellectuals, and other Indian experts to formulate a proposal.

The assertion in your resolution that the CAA will strip 200 million Indian Citizens who follow the Islamic faith is categorically FALSE. To the contrary, **CAA gives citizenship to over 30,000 religiously persecuted minorities** from countries in the region. It is no different than our Lautenberg Amendment which until recently was regarded highly by Congresswoman Rep. Pramila Jayapal from Washington State.

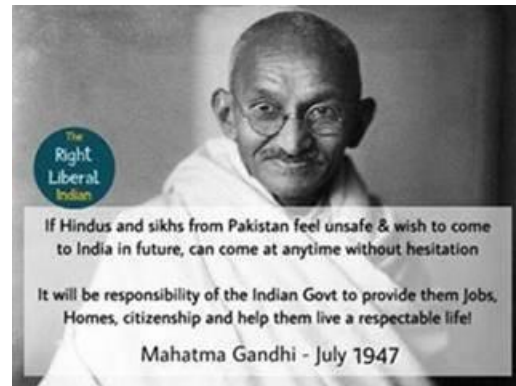
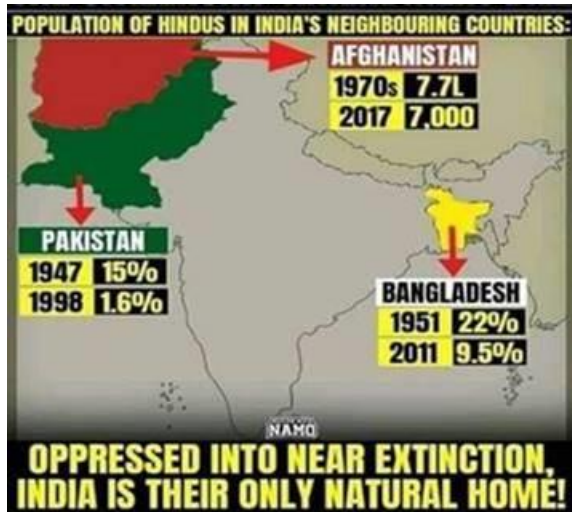
History of the CAA

Since you have taken it upon yourselves to deliberate on an internal matter of another sovereign country, we hope that you will spare some time to understand the historical facts about the matter.

After the violent separation of undivided India into India and Pakistan in 1947, the Indian Prime Minister Nehru signed the [Nehru-Liaquat Pact](#) in 1950 with the then Pakistani Prime Minister. This pact required each country to ensure that its minorities enjoy complete equality of citizenship and receive treatment identical to that available for other nationals of their country.

Between 1950 and recent times, the population of non-Muslims in Pakistan and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) has decreased to precipitously low levels.

According to Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Foundation's [White Paper on the Citizenship Amendment Bill](#), the percentage of Hindus in Pakistan in 1941 was nearly 14% and today it is just around 1.5%. Similarly, in Bangladesh, it was 22% in 1951 but is now less than 10%. These numbers amount to millions of lives.



A casual perusal of the facts of the 1971 Bangladesh war show how Islamist militias killed nearly 3 million Hindus, raped anywhere between 200,000 to 300,000 Bangladeshi Hindu women, internally displaced an estimated 30 million people and systematically attempted to purge any Hindu influence in Bangladesh. All of this because they were not Muslim and wanted to follow their own faith. Minority rights are practically non-existent in these Islamic countries. Until 2017 a Hindu marriage was not even considered legal in Pakistan.

At the same time, the percentage of Muslims in India since 1950 has grown from approximately 9% to 15% (as per the 2011 census).

Several studies such as from Pew Research show that by 2050 India will be home to the largest number of Muslims in the world.

1. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/21/by-2050-india-to-have-worlds-largest-populations-of-hindus-and-muslims/>
2. <https://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>

The CAA is limited in scope and targeted to help rehabilitate minorities left behind as a vestige of partition. **CAA has nothing to do with Indian citizens irrespective of their religions.**

CAA as it stands is only for those persecuted minorities who are already in India and are languishing in refugee camps prior to December 2014. CAA provides a pathway to citizenship to these persecuted people. It does not deprive a single Indian of their citizenship.

Irrespective of CAA, all regular naturalization routes continue to be available to all, Muslim and non-Muslim.

We hope you see that India's Citizenship Amendment Act is one of the most generous human rights laws ever passed by a country to help repatriate its erstwhile citizens who have been languishing as religious minorities in neighboring countries. We also hope you see that the National Registry of Citizens has nothing to do with the CAA.

This city council must unequivocally oppose this misinformed resolution that will create unnecessary divide and hate in our diverse communities. Let us focus on building bridges instead.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Ram Dixit, Bhakti Joshi, Archana Sunil

Board Members

Alliance for Persecuted Peoples Worldwide (APPWW)

www.appww.org

appww@appww.org

References

1. [Text of CAA](#)
2. [Becoming a Naturalized Indian Citizen](#)
3. [Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation's White Paper on CAB](#)
4. <https://www.hafsite.org/human-rights-issues/bangladesh-policy-brief-genocide-and-ethnic-cleansing-hindus>
5. <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/the-missing-hindus-in-south-asia-and-a-conspiracy-of-silence/story/1/1149.html>

Dear Council members,

The resolution you are proposing has two components- "Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste by rejecting the Bharatiya Janata Party's Islamophobic ideology, and opposing India's National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act."

I am not sure how the underlined section of your resolution statement supports the first section as it appears to be complete opposite of what you are trying to gain. It creates rift amongst the South Asian population and promotes misunderstanding and differences on the basis of religion.

I am not sure if you are aware of socio-cultural climate in the Indian sub-continent. The horrific human rights conditions of religious minorities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan is well documented. Religious minorities there face institutional, social, and religious persecution, and are not well served in these three nations which have privileged Islam as their official state

religion. In these three countries in South Asian religious minorities have seen demographic declines to the point of near extinction. Please review this report. <https://www.hinduamerican.org/projects/human-rights-report>

The current RES 20-712 is opposite in its essential nature and impact. It injects divisive overseas politics into Minnesota and thereby endangers the safety and well-being of people of Indian origin in the Twin Cities by creating a hostile environment for us and creating fault lines within the community. We know that the City Council strives for peace and friendship in our community. This resolution as written achieves the opposite.

This resolutions needs to be modified and reference to BJP and CAA needs to be removed from it. I look forward to hearing your comments.

Sincerely,

Manu Madhok

Dear Council Members

I write to ask you to support resolution 20-712, version 2 coming across your table for a vote on May 20th. *(This is a slightly expanded version of the letter submitted in support of version 1; for ease of reading for those who have already read the previous version, I have italicized the added portions.)*

In addition to being a resident of the Twin Cities and an American citizen, I am a Professor in the History Department at the University of Minnesota. I specialize in 19th and 20th c. Indian history, and regularly teach courses on Hinduism, as also on Hindu nationalism. (In fact, I have just finished teaching a course on the latter this Spring).

On the basis of my knowledge of South Asian history, I am willing to vouchsafe for the factual correctness of the assertions made in the resolution about the violent discrimination faced by Muslims in India today, and about how the CAA and the NRC will work together to make Muslims into second class citizens in India.

The BJP and its sister organizations (some of which, such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, World Hindu Council, are active also in the United States) can without inaccuracy be described as subscribing to a Hindu supremacist ideology. Just like white supremacists in the United States often make Christianity into an exclusionary ethnic and cultural identity, the BJP and its sister organizations degrade the rich and complex traditions of Hinduism by propagating in its name an exclusionary cultural identity. This identity authorizes violence against not only other communities, but against Hindus who dissent. And unfortunately, Hindu supremacism is even more widespread in India than white supremacism is in the United States today. This ideology is so commonsensical and naturalized by now that many Hindu supremacists do not even think of themselves as supremacists. (An analogous situation prevailed, it is worth remembering, with white supremacists in pre-Civil Rights United States; *arguably many white supremacists today feel similarly*).

In view of all this, I believe that those of us who believe in the equal rights of all citizens regardless of their religion or ethnicity, who believe in freedom of religion or protection for minorities against persecution and racism, must oppose the BJP's agenda in the clearest possible manner. This is what the Council has chosen to do through this resolution, and I admire the Council for its commitment to democratic values.

Amongst the letters you have received, I wish to draw special attention to the one from the World Hindu Council, which quite misrepresents the racist and supremacist intent and effect of the CAA-NRC. This will

be evident if you compare the Council's characterization of the situation to that provided in some the articles linked to below. I should also note that the World Hindu Council is extremely disingenuous in the way that it quotes Congressman Ro Khanna. Congressman Khanna has publicly condemned the CAA (see the following link: <https://twitter.com/StopHinduFa/status/1237092071787225088>)

I should also point that many of the comments in the comments section are provided from India by the well-oiled and well-funded publicity machinery associated with Hindutva or Hindu nationalism.

I also request you to not heed the call from some misinformed sections of the Indian community to study the matter more closely before passing the resolution. At this point, I believe the above facts are clear enough to need no further investigation, and I urge you to without delay pass resolution 20-712.

In case you are looking for further information from outside sources, here are three in-depth articles that you may find helpful

1. Dexter Filkins, ["Blood and soil in Narendra Modi's India,"](#) New Yorker, December 9, 2019. *This profile of the fearless young journalist Rana Ayyub provides also a good account of the broader politics in contemporary India.*
2. Soumya Shankar, ["India's citizenship law, in tandem with national registry, could make BJP's discriminatory targeting of Muslims easier,"](#) *The Intercept*, January 30, 2020. *For those who have little prior background, this article is very helpful for understanding how CAA and NRC is discriminatory.*
3. Ritika Jain, ["How India's government set off a spiral of Islamophobia,"](#) *Article 14*. *This website was set up by some of India's most respected public intellectuals in defense of the Indian constitution's Article 14 (which declares: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.").* *The article looks at how COVID 19 has served as an occasion for discriminatory practices against Muslims.*

Please do feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or questions. I will be glad to provide you with more information and analysis.

Best wishes

Ajay Skaria

Dear St. Paul City Council Members:

I write to urge you, please, to vote in support of Resolution 20-712 and show the world how open and welcoming St. Paul is.

Supporting a pluralistic, participatory democracy -- there and here -- is the way forward. Therefore, I reject the CAA.

Thank you for your consideration of my plea. Well wishes,

Nina Asher

To,

City Council Members,

St. Paul.

Sub: repudiating VHPA, and thanking Representative Ro Khanna and Vice President Biden for standing with persecuted communities

Dear Council member(s),

As you can see, this is my second letter to you in support of the resolution, primarily to respond to the points raised by the president (ajayshah@vhp-america.org) and the secretary (utsavc@gmail.com) of World Hindu Council of America, or **Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), which is an ideological affiliate of ethno-nationalist RSS (Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh).**

While the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), the ruling Party of India, is the electoral arm of RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad was set up in India to guide the spread RSS's ethnonationalist ideology in a more explicitly political manner in India and among Indian diaspora globally. For several decades now, the VHP and its youth wing Bajrang Dal have been engaged in hate-mongering against minorities and especially the Muslim community, whom they have demonized and ghettoized. As an internet search of reputable media will reveal, members of these groups have faced criminal charges in India on several occasions for their violence against Muslim and Christian communities

The VHPA writes in its comment:

“The real purpose of this resolution is to create hatred for Hindus and people of Indian origin residing in Minneapolis – St. Paul area. This resolution, if passed will lead to bullying of the children of Indian origin in schools and colleges and intimidate the hardworking people of Indian origin who work at the gas stations, 7/11s and motels among others.”

This is an outrageous mischaracterization: **the resolution is directed not at Hindus, but at the ethno-nationalist and supremacist ideology called Hindutva**, associated with BJP and RSS. Hindutva has nothing in common the tolerant religious/ cultural traditions of India that together are known as Hinduism. I grew up in vibrant and syncretic regional traditions where going to temples and churches were stuff all communities practiced; we celebrated all cultural traditions: Hindu, Muslim, and Christian.

In that India, until about 35 years ago there was no space for religion-based-hate of the kind we see these days, though there were other ills: caste, gender and class-based discriminations. The attempt under Hindutva is to deflect attention away from all these and other dissatisfactions. Hindutva-ideologues subsume all other forms of hate into the hate against non-Hindus.

When the Citizens Amendment Bill was put forward initially, the proposal was about exempting only four religions—*Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain*—considered to have originated in South Asia. *Not only Muslims, but also Christian and Parsi communities* were excluded. The exclusion of Christians raised more eyebrows, than that of the other two communities. As a result, the final draft that became the CA-Act excludes only one major south Asian religion: Islam.

The VHPA argues that the amendment of the citizenship act (1955) is to help address the issue of persecuted minorities in three countries referred. But this is false. Please note that **there is no reference to the term ‘persecution’ in CAA**, neither as a reason for this exemption nor for any other purpose. This is different from the U.S. immigration law in the Refugee Act of 1980, which defines **anyone persecuted “on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion,”** as eligible for asylum.

The VHPA also cites Representative Ro Khanna and Vice President Biden’s criticisms of the persecution of minorities in Afghanistan. But the VHP invocation is disingenuous. **The CAA-NRC does not so much protect minorities against persecution, as provide the institutional mechanisms for the official persecution of Muslims in India.**

Representative Ro Khanna is on record condemning the CAA for this, as an internet search will show.

To repeat: the resolution is clearly opposing the Hindu supremacism involved in CAA-NRC; it is not opposing Hinduism. It is in the interests of the VHP to conflate Hindu supremacism with Hinduism, and to claim to speak in the name of Hinduism, but this claim must not be accepted. Those supporting human rights would support the intent of the resolution.

Best wishes,

Shiney V

On Wed, 6 May 2020 at 01:00, Shiney V <shineyv@gmail.com> wrote:

To,

City Council Members,

St. Paul.

Dear Council member(s),

I write this to support the resolution **Reaffirming Saint Paul as a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul’s South Asian community**, opposing India’s National Registry of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act, **regardless of their religion and caste.**

The CAA discriminates by omission against those practicing the religion of Islam: the act identifies several South Asian religious sects originating from three countries—Pakistan Afghanistan and Bangladesh--as eligible for Indian citizenship, but omits reference to all Muslim sects from these countries even if they are persecuted minorities in these three nations. This **violates the spirit of the constitution of India**, a **secular** democratic republic.

As a resident of the Twin Cities for over the last two decades, I appreciate the St Paul City Council's efforts to stand with its progressive residents of Indian origin, who are opposing the Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) in solidarity with multitudes of Indians living in India, all who see CAA as violating Indian constitution that guarantees equal treatment of all religions.

National Registry of Citizens (NRC), can end up depriving many more Indians of their right to be recognized as Indian citizens, given that it does not accept even a passport as adequate proof of citizenship. NRC would require individuals to present evidence to prove their and their parents birth in India, and in a country such as India where birth certificates have become more of a norm only in recent decades, such documentary evidence is beyond the means of many communities including Dalits (lower castes), adivasis (indigenous tribes) and other poor people irrespective of their religion.

However, NRC in combination with the CAA, would allow Indian state to grant citizenship to those willing to claim to hail from the three aforesaid-nations, as long as they do not belong to Muslim communities. Thus **NRC in combination with CAA** becomes a Sophocles' sword hanging over all Indian Muslims. Also, **NRC by itself is a threat to all poor people without documentary evidence** since the detention camps being built are envisaged as their future homes. I speculate that this is especially convenient to help remove poor communities from their ancestral lands.

Apologies for this long letter of support, but I want you to understand what is at stake here.

At stake are: future of Indian poor; future of Indian Muslims, and future of India as a secular republic. Thank you for standing in solidarity with us,

Best wishes,

Shiney V

PS: Please do not hesitate to contact me if you want more information.

Also Please note the edit I have made to the title of the resolution.

FYI: <https://www.pgurus.com/a-tale-of-two-twin-cities/>

Is this what our city stands for? The city is named after a saint but in 2020, we are putting the name of that saint to shame. Perhaps you may be enjoying the notoriety and name recognition for our city. Please TABLE the resolution and save our city from getting divided for the wrong reasons. Let us stay together and fight the pandemic for the greater good. Thank you.

**"EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE
TO CHANGE THE
WORLD"...**

Nelson Mandela

On Mon, May 18, 2020 at 10:56 PM Vj Agarwal <agarwalvj@gmail.com> wrote:

TO: Council President Amy Brendmoen, Councilmember Mitra Jalali, Councilmember Rebecca Noecker, Councilmember Jane L. Prince, Councilmember Dai Thao, Councilmember Chris Tolbert, and Councilmember Nelsie Yang and

Dear Council President Brendmoen,

This letter is also faxed at 651 266 8574 because of urgency.

Earlier, I wrote to the City Council asking to TABLE the resolution 20-712 but to the best of my recollection, I have not heard. It is very disappointing that the Council is not responsive to citizen concerns. I am aware that the Council has discussed the issues related to this resolution with a group of concerned citizens following a very detailed response submitted by that group. That group, of which I am a signatory, also requested that the resolution be TABLED.

Ordinarily, the citizens can appear before the Council during live meetings and if they wish to comment, they do so. That is the democracy we cherish as individuals and as a nation. Not knowing whether the Council will TABLE the resolution on May 20, some of us have called your office to be part of the "video" live discussion in lieu of personal appearance (extraordinary situation due to COVID19). The Office was perplexed with our request and not sure how to respond or what to do?

It is URGENT that either the Council makes IMMEDIATE arrangement for us to be part of the council meeting through video network or the resolution be TABLED without further deliberation. The City should honor the democratic process and uphold the citizen's rights to partake in the discussion.

Let me assert once again that the resolution is not based on facts but a half-baked concoction with misinterpretation of CAA in India. The simplest corollary to CAA is Lautenberg Law allowing expedited Citizenship to persecuted religious minorities like Jews, Christians, and Baha'is (fleeing from Iran). In the simplest terms, the Lautenberg-Spector Amendment positively discriminates against Muslims but who am I to question the wisdom of elected lawmakers? Likewise, why the City Council is obsessed with debating a constitutionally approved CAA and that too during the unprecedented and deadly pandemic? I don't need to remind you that the millions need help for economic and emotional health challenges which must be the highest priority for the Council.

In conclusion, please TABLE the resolution but if you are obsessed to proceed with the discussion on May 20, provide us the link to the live discussion and allow us time to express our views during RES 20-712 discussion. Because of the shortness of time, please have your office call at 651 528 6763 or send an email immediately. Thank you.

Sincerely,

May 18, 2020

Vijendra Agarwal, Ph.D.

11599 Aileron Ct.

Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Vj Agarwal** <agarwalvj@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, May 11, 2020 at 2:52 PM

Subject: Resolution 20-172

To: agarwalvj <agarwalvj@gmail.com>, Vidya Gyan <vidyagyan2014@gmail.com>

Dear City Councilor,

I am a long-term proud resident of Minnesota of Indian origin. We call the greater Twin Cities home because of the vibrant, democratic, and welcoming society which respects human rights, religious freedom, and wellbeing of all individuals. The emergence of Resolution 20-172 is very disturbing indeed and I write to you again with strongest opposition and ask that it be TABLED. I can debate and write at length but respecting your time, I write to illustrate the following facts:

1. Councilwoman Jane L. Prince, one of the sponsors of the resolution, specifically referred to the demonstrations in February during President Trump's visit. I was in India at the time and watched it in real-time. Those were highly politically motivated demonstrations orchestrated by certain individuals. Truly a very unfortunate incidence causing 53 deaths among Hindus and Muslims, including a Hindu investigating Intelligent Bureau Officer. We must condemn such acts of violence anywhere. Since then, the [arrested](#) include Tahir Hussain (Aam Aadmi party councilor), Ishrat Jahan (Congress party councilor) and an activist Khalid Saifi. Please note that many innocent families suffered because of the violence and hatred fueled under the misguided leadership of Tahir Hussain; note who orchestrated- individuals of one faith representing the opposition political parties.
2. In addition, there are infamous *Shaheen Bagh* protests, orchestrated by similar political motivations to polarize the community, which inconvenienced thousands of children going to school and commuters to and from work every single day for months. The Hindu majority has not only tolerated but let the protest continue without any act of violence respecting individual right to protest under the Constitution. I want to assert that Hindus are the most tolerant, God-fearing, and law-abiding individuals. I hope that Councilor Rebecca Noecker, who spent more

than a year in Pune, will positively share her own experiences and speak about the harmonious coexistence of people of different faiths. India is home to minority religions: Sikhs, Jains, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, just to name a few.

3. I strongly encourage you to read the full article: <https://myind.net/Home/viewArticle/why-dont-hindus-stand-up-against-anti-hindu-anti-india-agenda> At a minimum, allow me to cite Rep Tulsi Gabbard, US Presidential candidate, and a Hindu, how she expresses her feelings about Hinduphobia. The current resolution before the City is nothing more than an attempt to perpetrate totally unsubstantiated Hinduphobia by a group of misinformed people who want to divide our communities. We must not let that happen. I argue that the City should be spending time and precious resources of taxpayers to discuss more important issues during these uncertain and extraordinary times of COVID 19 rather than interfering in the internal affairs of the largest democracy and a natural ally of the United States. I assert that the cultural and trade relations between Minnesota and India will strengthen with your VOTE AGAINST the motion.

Here is what Rep. Gabbard says about India:

“Although India and Hindus were attacked for centuries, India maintained a peaceful environment and communal harmony, to a great extent. India is the second most populated country in the world with 1.34 billion people...in essence, four times the population of the U.S. in less-than-one-third of U.S land. You can certainly imagine the complexity India faces as a country. In comparison, the issues are managed brilliantly, and balance is restored quickly oftentimes. The recent past has been particularly difficult for the Hindus, Hinduism, and India; as we have witnessed communist media’s effort to defame, divide and weaken India.

These questions have been bothering me for a while –

1. Is there one Hindu (or a group) who stood up against blatant bias, negative narratives, defamation, and anti-Hindu and anti-India propaganda?
2. Why would U.S. Democrats, like Bernie Sanders, an ultra-leftist communist, be influenced to propagate such sick anti-India, anti-Hindu statements, directly inciting violence against Hindus worldwide?
3. How many Indian Muslims were driven out of India?
4. Why are the western media relentlessly pushing an one-sided narrative of victimhood, painting the Modi government as fascists, murderous, genocidal, xenophobic and anti-Muslim?

LET'S START WITH SOME FACTS ABOUT INDIA:

First, India is the ONLY country with the largest Muslim population outside Muslim-majority countries

Second, India holds third of world's Muslim population (10.9%), slightly behind Pakistan (11.1%) and Indonesia (12.7%) [Note, just a few years ago, India was at the second place over Pakistan]

Third, India has over 200 million Muslims - can one neighboring Islamic state provide such statistics of minorities?

Fourth, India remains a secular country. YET, the neighboring Islamic State nations (Pakistan & Bangladesh) cannot say the same

Fifth, there are 51 Islamic nations, 0 Hindu countries, 1 Jewish country, and the rest are Christian and Buddhist countries, out of 195 countries in the world

Sixth, India is a Hindu majority country with 79% Hindus and 21% minority. This percentage is retained more-or-less constant since the 1947 India-Pakistan division. Nepal was a Hindu nation at the time of monarchs, BUT not anymore - it was declared as a secular state in 2007 after abolition of it's monarchy

Seventh, Pakistan's minority number dropped from ~27% in 1947 to 2% now, and numbers fell from ~23% to 10% in Bangladesh.”

In closing, I ask that you TABLE the motion to preserve, promote, and perpetuate harmony among all irrespective of who they are, where they come from, and what faith they belong to. Our city must rise to her strength of welcoming ethnic groups of multi-faith and multicultural backgrounds. I hope that all of you are aware of Asian Indian community, including thousands of doctors and other professionals, in supporting the larger effort in fighting the invisible and deadly COVID 19. Together we will win that fight and make our community a better place if you TABLE or at least VOTE AGAINST the resolution 20-172. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Vijendra Agarwal, Ph.D.
(Former Dean at Minnesota State University, Mankato)
11599 Aileron Ct.
Inver Grove Heights, MN 5507

Dear Council Members

Please note what bigotry is going on under the garb of this resolution ? Look at the folks spamming the 'Public Comments section ' of the council page ? Are these the kind of comments that the honorable council will consider ??

What has a legislation passed by the parliament of another democratic country through their democratically elected representatives of the people have to do with St Paul City?

Is St Paul city attempting to demonize it's minority Hindu American population ? Hindu American citizens contribute greatly to this great country.

On behalf of Hindus And of the oppressed minorities of the Islamic countries of Pakistan, Afganistan and Bangladesh I implore you to reject Resolution 20-712 Thank you R shaligram

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of the Coalition of Hindus of North America (CoHNA), I am writing to you to express my strong opposition to Resolution 20-712 and ask that it be tabled. In the event it is not tabled, I ask that you vote NO. This resolution is deeply flawed, misguided, and divisive. During the unprecedented times of COVID-19 and the difficulties that all our communities are facing, does the Council want to spend precious money, resources, and time on matters that sow seeds of division and hatred? Would the Council and the people of St. Paul not be served better by helping those in need?

Resolution 20-712 not only misrepresents the people and the government of India, it also propagates [misinformation](#) about India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). In doing so, it jeopardizes the Hindu and Indian American community - a minority community that contributes significantly to the welfare and prosperity of the Twin Cities, the state of Minnesota and our great nation. Passing of this resolution will gaslight and harm the Hindu community while peddling Hinduphobia.

First, it is important to understand the [CAA](#). This act, passed in 2019, and an extension of India's Citizenship Act of 1955, aims to fast-track the citizenship process of persecuted religious minorities

(Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, etc.) of the three neighboring Islamic nations of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Also, this act is applicable only to those who fled persecution and entered India on or before December 31, 2014. **This act does not, in any shape or form, alter the citizenship or rights of India's 200 million Muslims who continue to enjoy the same rights as other communities under the Constitution of India. Nor does it restrict the entry of Muslims from the Islamic nations mentioned above.** Furthermore, even previous governments in India have issued calls for passing such a law – thus it is not unique to the current government and is not a sign of bigotry against Muslims and minorities.

Any statement that deviates from the above is therefore a dangerous political agenda that seeks to harm the good relations between the United States and India. Millions of Americans support India's effort to protect persecuted religious minorities and the Saint Paul City Council should also do the same. Consider the following reasons: (1) The [persecuted minorities](#) of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh are on the verge of near demographic extinction. They have been systemically and systematically denied a minimum standard of living. Women and children have been raped and [forced](#) into marriages, following conversion. There have been also been reports of starvation and violence during the current COVID-19 crisis. Just in March 2020, radicals from ISIS [killed](#) 25 Sikhs – including several women and one child - in Afghanistan, where the total Sikh population is only around 600. (2) India has historically welcomed religiously persecuted minorities, much like the US, and these minorities have thrived. An especially important example is the tiny but prosperous community of [Zoroastrians](#) (Parsis) who fled Iran and made India their home a few centuries ago. (3) The U.S. has an almost identical law to India's CAA - the [Lautenberg-Specter Amendment](#). In fact, the great state of Minnesota, with its rich [history](#) of welcoming immigrants and refugees, is home to some 12,500 beneficiaries of this very program that benefits Jews, Evangelical Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, and Ukrainian Orthodox Christians from states of the former Soviet Union. Persecuted Baha'is, Christians, and Jews from Iran, and Indochinese nationals are also included. (4) In December 2019, the City of St. Paul passed its own [resolution](#) “supporting the expansion of access to citizenship, lawful permanent residency, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), asylum, and other forms of immigration status and benefits” and declared that the city welcomes immigrants and refugees. In 2003, Randy Kelly, former Mayor of St. Paul, led a delegation to Thailand to welcome and help 15,000 [Hmong refugees](#) from Laos, and help them settle in Minnesota. By passing Resolution 20-712, the city is essentially renegeing on that spirit and opining that other countries and places should not welcome severely persecuted minorities.

Secondly, the resolution is wrong on the claim that the National Registry of Citizens (NRC) will discriminate against LGBTQ people, atheists, Adivasis, Muslims, and low caste Hindus, and demonstrates the Council's complete lack of knowledge and familiarity about India. The Government of India has made clear that there is [no plan](#) for a national NRC. It has also [assured](#) that, if and when the NRC is administered, no one will be excluded on the basis of religion, gender, or caste (the latter exists in all faith communities in India, not just among Hindus). There is no basis to claim the Indian Government seeks to discriminate against LGBTQ people. In fact, the BJP led parliament [passed](#) the Transgender Protection of Rights Bill that went into effect this past January. The BJP led government also [opened](#) India's first transgender university in 2019.

The inclusion of atheists is ignorant at best and blatantly false at worst. While atheists are persecuted, even beheaded, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, India's civilizational ethos of pluralism has given rise and space to various philosophical traditions of atheism.

Resolution 20-712 states that it is reaffirming the city to be "a welcoming city, expressing solidarity with Saint Paul's South Asian community." The effect, however, is the opposite. The Saint Paul City Council has single-handedly created divisions in the peaceful South Asian community by venturing into politics it knows little about, and taking cues from organizations that have a history of peddling Hinduphobia and supporting denigration of Hindu religious festivals and symbols. In doing so, it has

created a hostile atmosphere for Hindu Americans in the Twin Cities. In an environment where Hindus are already facing discrimination and hatred, such resolutions add fuel to the fire, and advance anti-Hindu prejudice and bigotry that openly discounts the fact that Hindus, Sikhs and other religious minorities continue to be persecuted in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

For these reasons, we urge the Saint Paul City Council to uphold their oath, demonstrate responsible governance, and table this non-germane, factually inaccurate, and deeply divisive resolution which will cause irreparable damage to the Hindu community.

Sincerely,

Nikunj Trivedi
President,
Coalition of Hindus of North America