



Legislation Text

File #: RES 20-712, **Version:** 2

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 ~~democratic~~ 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 ~~4/8/2020~~ April 8, 2020; and

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

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 advocates creation of a militant Hindu state, and implicitly and explicitly promotes~~ discrimination against Muslims; and

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 ~~the BJP government claims to will~~ help refugees fleeing religious persecution from neighboring countries, but which ~~in fact is designed to~~ discriminates against Muslims favoring Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian immigrants, while by excluding millions of Muslims who have come to India to flee wars in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and other Muslim countries; and

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

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

WHEREAS, in 2019, ~~the Modi's~~ 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

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

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

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 Hindu mobs and police of Muslim homes in cities such as Bijnor, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Sambhal, Firozabad, and Rampur; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council intends to convey dissent against Trump's blanket support of Prime Minister Modi 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 Modi 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

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

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

WHEREAS, the novel coronavirus is galvanizing the bigotry and violence against India's Muslim population 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

~~WHEREAS, the Coronavirus crisis and scapegoating of India's Muslim community has highlighted the BJP's inherently Islamophobic philosophy especially through the implementation of the CAA and the NRC; and~~

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

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 BJP's Indian government's exclusionary ideology; and

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;

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

RESOLVED, ~~Saint Paul City Council affirms~~ that the integrity of the trade relationship between the Twin Cities and India must ~~be founded~~ 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 ~~and finds the policies of these laws to be, 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.