

September 15, 2019

The Honorable Ro Khanna  
U.S. House of Representatives  
221 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Khanna,

We write as a diverse coalition of Hindu and Indian American organizations, professional associations, and leaders representing hundreds of thousands of community members from across the country to express our serious concern with your recent actions and statements on issues relating to the Indian Subcontinent and the diaspora, including those outlined below.

**Joining the Pakistan Caucus**

As a leading member of the House India Caucus, Foreign Affairs Committee, and a champion of human rights, we are deeply troubled that you joined the Congressional Pakistan Caucus.

Pakistan continues to utilize terror assets to attack U.S. interests in Afghanistan and wage a proxy war against India. Pakistan has shown a complete and utter disregard for human rights and religious freedom and was recently labeled as a Country of Particular Concern by the U.S. State Department for its “systematic, ongoing, [and] egregious violations of religious freedom” against Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Shia and Ahmadiyya Muslims.

We believe that your membership in this Caucus is contrary to both American principles and our geostrategic interests in the Indian Subcontinent and the broader South Asian region.

Accordingly, we urge you to withdraw from the Congressional Pakistan Caucus. We further urge you to write directly to Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and meet with Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan to address Pakistan’s ongoing use of terrorism to destabilize the region and its rampant and severe human rights violations.

**Statement on Kashmir**

While we appreciate your recent media statement on the abrogation of Article 370, we urge you to make a formal statement for the Congressional record in order to educate other policymakers on this issue. This statement should address the increased civil rights that will be afforded to the residents of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh with the removal of Article 370.

Article 370, which conferred special status on India’s state of Jammu and Kashmir, was a highly discriminatory provision that prevented Kashmiris from enjoying the same rights and benefits afforded to all other Indian citizens. Women, children, historically disadvantaged communities, religious minorities, and LGBT people were especially impacted and subjugated to an inferior status under Article 370, which allowed the state to make a separate set of laws.

In addition, the statement must highlight the ethnic cleansing of over 350,000 Kashmiri Hindu Pandits from their ancestral home in the Kashmir Valley nearly three decades ago.

### **Social Media Statement Endorsing Anti-Hindu Bigot**

Your recent tweet endorsing the views of a fringe and extremist anti-Hindu activist, Pieter Friedrich, is unacceptable.

Friedrich has a long track record of working for a group called Organization for Minorities of India (OFMI). OFMI was founded by Bhajan Singh Bhinder, who was the subject of an undercover United States Customs Service investigation for trying to purchase C-4 plastic explosives, M-16s, AK-47s, grenade and rocket launchers, and Stinger missiles in support of the Khalistan terrorist movement in India.

Moreover, Friedrich has verbally harassed Hindu American children and their parents peacefully waiting in line to testify at the California State Board of Education. Some of his supporters were actually escorted out of the Board of Education meetings because of their harassment of schoolchildren. He also testified several times at the California State Board of Education between 2015-2017 denigrating Hinduism, and promoting the inclusion of negative stereotypes on Hinduism in California textbooks. Friedrich has attended protests promoting hate speech against Hinduism and Hindu symbols. Finally, under OFMI's banner, he has campaigned to force the removal of Mahatma Gandhi statues across the US, making outlandish claims that the icon of the non-violence movement "allied himself with Adolf Hitler."

Further exacerbating matters, you then retweeted several subsequent statements by individuals/organizations who share Friedrich's hateful views about Hindu Americans and Hinduism.

Consequently, we urge you to retract your initial tweet and any retweets. In addition, we ask that you issue a clarifying statement that you do not endorse the views of this fringe and extremist activist. Finally, we ask that you speak out vociferously against any individuals including but not limited to Friedrich who espouse hateful and bigoted views about Hindu Americans and Hinduism.

Thank you for your attention to these critical issues and we look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

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