

PRESS RELEASE



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STATEMENT ON ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW HINDU, BUDDHIST, SIKH, AND JAIN CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS

October 3, 2023 (Washington, DC) – In response to last week’s planned announcement of the so-called Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain Congressional (HBSJ) Caucus led by Congressman Shri Thanedar (D-MI), several community- and faith-based human rights organizations with constituencies among the impacted groups released the following statement:

“We are surprised to hear of the formation of the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain (HBSJ) Congressional Caucus without the consultation of mainstream organizations representing these faith communities, such as ours.”

“To be clear, we welcome any caucus to forward the interests of our and other religious communities, so long as it does so in a way that is inclusive of perspectives of the entire South Asian community across faith, caste, and ethnic lines. We are skeptical, however, that this particular caucus meets that description. In June of this year, Congressman Thanedar announced his intention to form a Hindu Caucus without input from the full spectrum of Hindu American civil society, including Dalit and linguistic community organizations. This caucus seems to be a new iteration of that previous announcement.”

“If this caucus is that announcement repackaged with a more inclusive label but the same makeup, it will likely combat meaningful oversight of the U.S.-India relationship, ongoing work to protect the civil rights and safety of Sikhs and other marginalized groups, and efforts to ban caste discrimination at a federal level. Moreover, given the lack of Muslim representation, it may oppose ongoing efforts to combat Islamophobia. In short, any caucus without inclusive representation from the Indian diaspora will serve as nothing more than a vehicle for Hindu nationalist policies that will inevitably harm the entire South Asian American community, including Sikh, Muslim, Dalit, Buddhist, Jain, and even Hindu Americans.”

Signatories to the statement:

Hindus for Human Rights

The Sikh Coalition

The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Emgage

The Indian American Muslim Council

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