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# CHECK OUT THE TWO PROJECTS WE RECENTLY LAUNCHED!

## OUR NEW WEBSITE AND URL

That's right, we have a new URL, too! Visit us at [hinduamerican.org](http://hinduamerican.org).

If you haven't already seen it, you're missing out. Earlier this year, we launched our newly redesigned website. It's the same great content you've come to expect from us, but now in a more user friendly environment. The new site makes it easier for you to find the material you need and allows you to customize the type of information you want to receive from us!

## OUR NEW PODCAST, "THAT'S SOOO HINDU!"

Featured guests include the likes of Eddie Stern, Rajiv Satyal, and Sham Sharma.

THAT'S SO HINDU brings you interviews with a wide swath of the contemporary Hindu community: entrepreneurs, activists, politicians, professors, journalists, entertainers, spiritual teachers, and more. We're talking with them about how Hinduism shapes their work and lives.

Tune in on your favorite podcast platform.

## WHY I WORK FOR HAF

When I meet people in the community and I tell them that I work for the Hindu American Foundation, the first thing they say is "Why are you working for HAF?" As you may have guessed, I'm not Hindu. But just because I'm not Hindu doesn't mean that I don't subscribe to the values, ideals, and the mission of HAF: dignity, mutual respect, and pluralism. To me, that's another way of saying "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." America and the world would be a better place if more people lived their lives with those ideals in mind.

At that point in the conversation, I usually tell folks that I'm Armenian American, and there are a lot of similarities between the Armenian American and Hindu American experience. Whether it is coming from an immigrant family and building a new life in America, or belonging to a strong community deeply rooted in an ancient

faith. To me, working for HAF is a natural fit, where I can dedicate my skills and experiences to help a righteous cause that has a positive impact on American society.

Since I joined HAF last May, I've gotten to know and work with some extraordinary people. I've been welcomed by an amazing organization and I've been accepted by an incredible community. I'm proud to be a member of the HAF family.

The Hindu American Foundation has BIG plans for 2020. We are expanding the map in terms of our grassroots advocacy; we are strengthening anti-hate laws in Congress and in state legislatures; and we are committed to elevating the U.S.-India relationship. I'm really excited to continue working alongside all of you, and I look forward to being back in touch soon!

**Taniel Koushakjian**  
*Director of Public Policy*



## WE'RE GROWING...

Welcome our new National Leadership Council members

### KAUSHIK MACHERLA

Kaushik Macherla is a co-lead of HAF's Northern California chapter and is the lead organizer for the annual Silicon Valley gala and other local events.

### NAMAN GUPTA

Naman Gupta is a graduate of HAF's summer internship program and continues to be involved in expanding our fundraising efforts.

### PRIYA PANDIT

Priya Pandit is a co-lead of HAF's Dallas chapter where she organizes the annual local gala and participates in interfaith roundtables hosted by the Department of Justice.

### RAJEEV SINGH

Rajeev Singh is a co-lead of HAF's Northern California chapter and manages strategic relations in the region.

## WANT TO WORK FOR HAF?

The needs of our community are growing. To meet them, we're expanding our staff. We are looking for three individuals to join our team full-time in the following roles:

- › Content Writer
- › Systems Administrator
- › Managing Director of Development

If you (or someone you know) are passionate about Hindu American advocacy and want to be a part of a dynamic and energetic team, check out the full job descriptions online at [hinduamerican.org/careers](http://hinduamerican.org/careers).

# Save the Date for HAF's 2020 Advocacy Forum!

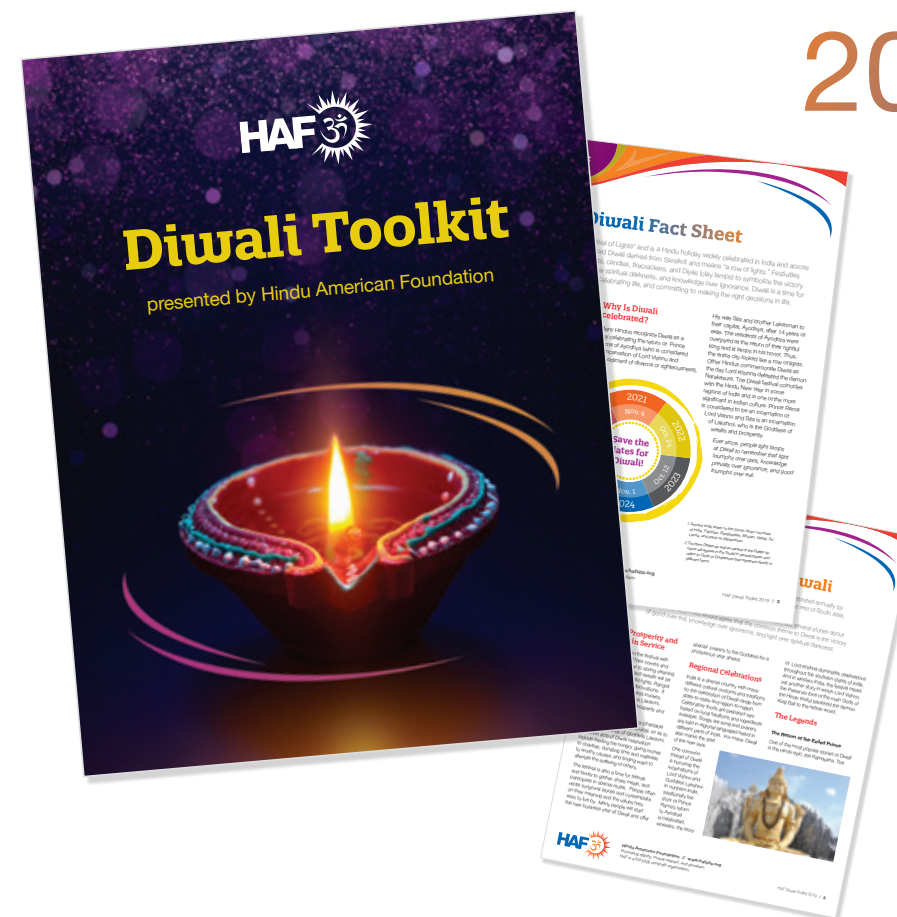
September 13-14  
Washington, D.C.

Meet your Congressmen.  
Experience advocacy.  
Represent your community.

Stay up to date! Visit us at [hinduamerican.org/advocacy-forum](https://hinduamerican.org/advocacy-forum)  
for the latest information.

## 2020 HOLI TOOLKIT IS NOW AVAILABLE!

To download, please visit  
[hinduamerican.org/  
haf-holi-toolkit](https://hinduamerican.org/haf-holi-toolkit).



## 2020 DIWALI TOOLKIT COMING SOON!

Stay tuned at  
[hinduamerican.org](https://hinduamerican.org).

# NATIONWIDE VIGILS ON JANUARY 19TH MARKED 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF KASHMIRI PANDIT EXODUS



## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

India's Citizenship Amendment Act has caused unwarranted outrage against Hindus both in India and here in America. Seattle's city council passed a resolution against it. Now, Cambridge, MA has followed suit. The Hindu festival of Holi is being misappropriated on college campuses in protest of CAA. Western media outlets continue their biased and factually inaccurate reporting of blaming Hindus for any outbreak of violence in India. Anyone advocating for Hindus is immediately shunned and labeled as Hindutva.

The attacks on our community seem relentless.

### Where do we go from here?

No matter where the battle is, no matter what the issue, no matter the face of the opposition, what is important is engaging everyone, telling them who we are, what we believe and practice, and what we stand for. There is no substitute for that.

As a co-founder of HAF, I can honestly say we have done this with great success in some areas and failures in others.

We have come a long way.

In 2004, HAF was the first Hindu organization to engage the US Congress. At that time, we were asked, "Are you Shia or Sunni?" That was the level of religious illiteracy.

In the years since, we have come away with positive changes in curriculum; educated thousands of teachers and in turn, tens of thousands of students; gotten Diwali celebrated and recognized in the White House, US Congress, state capitols, and local governments.

But we have a long way to go.

*This is a fight for a religion, for a way of life that accepts all paths; for a people who don't just tolerate but have accepted all people of all faiths; for the oldest civilization in the world that for more than 5,000 years has given so much to the story of human civilization.*



The important thing now is to refocus our energy for the next fight, whenever and wherever that may come. The outcomes will not always be as we desire, but as Bhagwan Krishna said, we should work for the work itself, not the outcome.

**Mihir Meghani, MD**  
Co-Founder, Hindu American Foundation

## A Good Start, but the Citizenship Amendment Act Does Not Go Far Enough

The Indian Parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), an act amending the country's existing laws governing citizenship. The amendment removes substantial barriers to legal resettlement and citizenship by proposing amnesty for Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis (Zoroastrian), and Christians who sought shelter in India on or before December 31, 2014 due to religious persecution in their native countries of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, People's Republic of Bangladesh, and Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It also proposes that

illegal entry not be a bar to naturalization for members of these communities, and that the minimum residency requirement of 11 years be reduced to six.

The CAA does not change citizenship laws or other immigration laws. It only provides legal status and a fast-track to citizenship to refugees who are in India as a result of having fled religious persecution from neighboring states that privilege Islam as the official state religion.

Contrary to the reporting of major outlets such as the New York Times, Time Magazine, and others, the current proposal does not "establish a religious test" for migrants who want to become citizens nor "give migrants of all of South Asia's major religions a clear path to Indian citizenship — except Islam."

Muslims are able to emigrate to India through any legal channel. The CAA

provides a path to amnesty for certain religious minorities who fled persecution in their native countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan on or before a specific date and in the absence of India having an official refugee/asylum policy. That said, there is no question, and should be no question as to the rights and privileges of Indian Muslims as equal citizens of India.

We at the Hindu American Foundation have long recommended legal status and a pathway to citizenship for persecuted religious minorities who have sought refuge in India. To this end, we believe the Citizenship Amendment Act is long overdue and necessary. We also believe it does not go far enough.

To read our full statement, please visit our website at [hinduamerican.org/press/india-citizenship-amendment-bill](http://hinduamerican.org/press/india-citizenship-amendment-bill).

**Hindu American Foundation**  
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Promoting dignity, mutual respect,  
and pluralism.

Visit us our new website and URL  
at **[www.hinduamerican.org](http://www.hinduamerican.org)**

*HAF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.*



Check it out! HAF is now  
Platinum rated on Guidestar!

**AS A HAF SUPPORTER,  
YOU ARE:**

- PROMOTING** pluralism and mutual respect
- ENSURING** an accurate understanding of Hinduism as a living tradition
- SUPPORTING** the human rights of Hindus worldwide
- STRENGTHENING** the Hindu American voice and ensuring our community's needs are met
- SHARING** Hindu solutions to contemporary problems
- BUILDING** the foundation for future generations



**VISIT [HINDUAMERICAN.ORG](http://HINDUAMERICAN.ORG)  
AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!**