



April 18, 2018

VIA MAIL-DELIVERY AND E-MAIL:

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
United States Senate
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for S. 994, Protecting Religiously-Affiliated Institutions Act of 2017

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein,

We write to you on behalf of the Hindu American Foundation (HAF), a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization for the country's three million Hindu Americans, to express our strong support for *S.994, Protecting Religiously-Affiliated Institutions Act of 2017*.

This legislation is critical to protecting the safety, security, and religious liberty of all religious communities in the U.S. by making threats against religious institutions a federal crime and establishing criminal penalties for a violation that results in damage or destruction to religious property. Similar to actual attacks, vandalism, and arson, the threat of such acts against religious institutions causes fear and intimidation that prevents individuals from being able to fully exercise their religious rights.

Religious communities are feeling increasingly insecure, given the recent uptick in hate motivated incidents and threats, including the recent spate of bomb threats and vandalism against Jewish community institutions and cemeteries, the burning of a mosque in Texas, the vandalism against two Hindu temples in Washington, and the hate crime shooting of Hindu immigrants, Srinivas Kuchibotla and Alok Madasani in Kansas.

Furthermore, according to the FBI, there were 1,538 report hate crimes motivated by religious bias in 2016, and these incidents continued to increase in 2017.

S.994 will thus go a long way towards reassuring all communities that the government is doing everything in its power to deter future threats and prosecute perpetrators of hate motivated incidents.

Notably, the House version of the bill (H.R. 1730) overwhelmingly passed in the U.S. House of Representatives on a 402-2 vote.



Consequently, we strongly support S.994. If you have any questions, please contact Jay Kansara, HAF's Director of Government Relations at jay@hafsitesite.org or at (202) 223-8222.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Suhag Shukla, Esq.
Executive Director and Legal Counsel

Samir Kalra, Esq.
Managing Director

Jay Kansara
Director of Government Relations