

Administration to prioritize funding for the modernization of medical transportation programs for rural, underserved and female Veterans.

According to the American Hospital Association, 3.6 million people in the U.S. do not obtain medical care due to transportation barriers. And another report tells us that missed healthcare appointments cost the U.S. health system \$150 billion each year.

The underlying committee report includes a pilot program to address transportation barriers for rural Veterans.

In light of this and the Veterans Transportation Program, the VA can play a critical role in collaborating with other federal agencies to reduce duplication and modernize medical transportation programs across public programs.

As we work to address rising health care costs, our federal agencies collaborate to modernize and expand public medical transportation programs.

CONDEMNING FEBRUARY 14 TERRORIST ATTACKS AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE PLIGHT OF THE KASHMIRI PANDITS

**HON. BRAD SHERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 21, 2019*

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, I want to draw attention to the ongoing problem of terrorism in Kashmir and the often-overlooked plight of the Kashmiri Hindu Pandits.

On February 14, 2019, a terrorist attack in Kashmir killed 40 Indian Central Reserve Police Force personnel. This attack was perpetrated by an operative of Jaish-e-Mohammed, a U.S. and UN-designated terrorist group. Then, on June 13, 2019, 5 Indian Central Reserve Police Force personnel were killed in another terrorist attack in Kashmir perpetrated by Al Umar Mujahideen, a different terrorist organization. These attacks are hardly unusual—over the years, thousands of civilians and security personnel have been killed in terrorist attacks in Kashmir.

The United States has been attacked by terrorist groups similar to the ones in Kashmir. It is therefore imperative that we stand with India in this time of need.

The Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir has historically had a culture of religious tolerance and pluralism, where Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Christians practiced their faith freely in an atmosphere of mutual respect and peace. The violence the region has witnessed in recent decades has eroded this tradition. One group that has suffered as a result is the Kashmiri Pandits, who have lived in Kashmir for centuries. By some estimates, 300,000 Pandits once lived in Kashmir. Today, by some estimates, only 3,000–5,000 remain. This is a tragedy that is too often ignored. Sadly, the violence in Kashmir is likely to continue until different sects restore the tradition of religious tolerance and pluralism.

To conclude, I ask my colleagues to co-sponsor H. Res. 408, which Congressman PERRY, Congressman KRISHNAMOORTHY, and I introduced in May 2019. Besides condemning the February terrorist attacks, this resolution acknowledges that the House of Representatives supports the rights of religious and other minorities around the world, including the Kashmiri Pandits.