



March 10, 2020

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
Assembly Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2110 (Chu) – School Safety Training on Hate and Bias Events (Support)

Dear Chair O'Donnell,

The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) is pleased to support AB 2110 (Chu), which will require the State Department of Education, in consultation with the State Department of Justice, relevant experts in the field, and civil rights groups, to create training materials and guidelines for school administrators and staff on how to prevent, recognize, and respond to hate and bias-related events that occurs on school grounds. The training materials and guidelines will be provided to all public schools that serve grades K-12 and incorporated into the school's comprehensive safety plan.

HAF is a non-profit advocacy organization for the Hindu American community. Founded in 2003, HAF's work impacts a range of issues — from the portrayal of Hinduism in K-12 textbooks to civil and human rights to immigration reform and hate crimes. We have worked closely with the Department of Justice, law enforcement, and legislators in California and across the country to track and address bias motivated attacks on the Hindu and Indian American communities.

Hate crimes against Hindus in the U.S. have rapidly increased in the past several years, and the number of Hindu victims of violent attacks, temple desecration, vandalism, and arson have increased since 2015, according to FBI statistics. Moreover, one third of Hindu students reported being bullied for their religious beliefs in American schools, according to a survey conducted by the Hindu American Foundation.

Accordingly, we want to ensure Hindu American students and their families have the right resources and tools to combat hateful language and behavior and that schools are equipped to prevent and deal with bias-related incidents and hate crimes. This bill is thus critical to creating a safe and secure school environment for all of our students, including Hindu Americans.

Under the California Constitution, all students and staff have the right to feel safe and secured at school. However, this is not the case for many students and employees. Schools are not immune to hate and bias-related events, and students and staff are concerned for their safety while at school. According to the State Department of Justice, a total of 59 hate crimes took place at elementary and secondary schools in 2018. This is unacceptable. There is currently no law to require California school administrators and staff to get trained on how to prevent, recognize, or respond to an act of hate or bias that occurs at school. Having clear training and guidelines for school administrators and staff will result in better prevention and response to these events.

HINDU AMERICAN FOUNDATION

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For these reasons, the Hindu American Foundation is pleased to support AB 2110. For more information about the Hindu American Foundation's support of AB 2110, please contact Samir Kalra, Esq., Managing Director, at samir@hafsite.org or 408.464.8715.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Samir Kalra'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Samir Kalra, Esq.
Managing Director
Hindu American Foundation

CC: The Honorable Kansen Chu, Member of the State Assembly