
From: Lacombe, Beatriz
Sent: Monday, February 20, 2023 10:04 AM
To: Venkataraman, Asha
Cc: City Clerk Filing; Virdone, Ted
Subject: FW: Councilwoman Kshama Sawant comments about CoHNA

From: "suresh.krishnamoorthy" <suresh.krishnamoorthy@cohna.org>
Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 8:22 AM
To: "Juarez, Debora" <Debora.Juarez@seattle.gov>, "Herbold, Lisa" <Lisa.Herbold@seattle.gov>, "Morales, Tammy" <Tammy.Morales@seattle.gov>, "Pedersen, Alex" <Alex.Pedersen@seattle.gov>, "Lewis, Andrew" <Andrew.Lewis@seattle.gov>, "Mosqueda, Teresa" <Teresa.Mosqueda@seattle.gov>, "Nelson, Sara" <Sara.Nelson@seattle.gov>
Cc: Kshama Sawant <Kshama.Sawant@seattle.gov>
Subject: Councilwoman Kshama Sawant comments about CoHNA

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Councilmembers,

We, the undersigned represent the Board and leadership of the Coalition of Hindus of North America (CoHNA), and wish to register our strong objection to Councilmember Sawant's comments at the committee briefing yesterday. She characterized our organization as – and we quote – "Their agenda is extremely right wing and extremely aligned with the regime that is currently in power in India."

Dismissing opposition by calling them names is nothing new in politics. But Councilmember Sawant has raised it to an art form.

Let us state this categorically and for the record:

CoHNA, its Board and Mission have absolutely nothing to do with whatever political agenda may exist in India or any other "regime".

We are all citizens of the US and proud Hindu-Americans. Our mission is very clear on our website: Be a voice for Hindus in North America while advocating for human rights worldwide. Like every other advocacy group, we advocate for our constituents – Hindu Americans living in the US and Canada.

As our mission statement makes clear, we will take a position on human rights violations that happen worldwide, particularly if it affects Hindus. We say that with pride and no trace of apology.

We challenge Councilmember Sawant to find evidence of **any** association between CoHNA and any foreign power. We are confident she will not take it up because she knows that there is no such evidence. We go so far to call her characterization of CoHNA a lie. Since our name has been taken up in open committee as a "right-wing outfit" we think it is only fair that we get an opportunity to interact in person with the Council and answer any questions you may have regarding our alleged "alignment".

Our Board consists of a diverse group of Hindu Americans, including from Dalit / Bahujan backgrounds. Our members and donors represent a shining example of a truly caste-indifferent group of Hindu-Americans unlike the agenda driven and Hinduphobic organizations like Equality Labs. We absolutely reject Ms Sawant's transparent attempt to create divisions with exaggerations and in this

case, outright lies. If we were not opposed to this legislation coming out of Ms Sawant's office before, we would be, after this unfounded charge at our organization.

As for the "evidence" she offers, we certainly support the CAA, just as we support our own Lautenberg Amendment offering asylum in the US. Not because of any ties with the Indian Government or political parties, but because **it is the right thing to do for Hindus** who live in fear in those countries covered by the CAA. We have recorded the horrific abuse of Hindus and other minorities over the last few decades in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh on our website.

Councilmember Sawant invited you to visit our website and see for yourself. We urge you to take up that offer. But if you are unable to, here are some sample news reports we document on our site:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-56337182>

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/calls-britain-asylum-pakistani-christian-134214827.html>

A couple of days ago, a Hindu was [lynched and set on fire](#) for blasphemy in Pakistan.

In our view, Councilmember Sawant has animus towards a popularly elected government in India and is attempting to bend the Seattle City Council to create a splash during her lame duck term to further her political ambitions. But that is not why we reject her characterization of our organization.

We reject it because it is not true.

We reject it because it returns us to the dark days of McCarthyism. That was wrong when done against socialists and it is now wrong when done **by** a socialist.

Sincerely

Suresh Krishnamoorthy

Rajeev Menon

Sudha Nair

Dipal Pandya

Pushpita Prasad

Yagnesh Patel

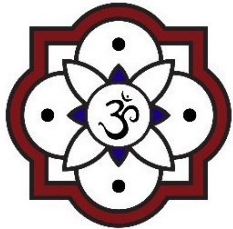
Jiten Rakundlia

Sohini Sarkar

Shoba Swamy

Nikunj Trivedi

web: www.cohna.org



CoHNA

Coalition of Hindus of North America