



December 4, 2013

Dear Representative,

H.Res 417, introduced by Reps. Pitts and Ellison, is of great concern to Indian and Hindu Americans due to its inaccuracies, blatant omissions, and flawed recommendations. While the resolution begins by praising India for its commitment to pluralism and tolerance, it becomes evident that the drafters have selectively cherry-picked incidents to draw a skewed picture of India and condemn only Hindus. H. Res. 417 is oversimplified and fails to take into account India's complex historical, political, religious, and socio-economic ground realities. **We request that you rescind co-sponsorship of H. Res 417.**

While there are a number of issues with the resolution, we highlight four of the most pressing below.

1. H. Res 417 is perplexingly selective in the violence it highlights. Unfortunately, there are a number of glaring omissions such as the fact that 80% of attacks in 2012 alone were carried about by the Indian Mujahideen, with much of the remaining 20% carried out by Maoist terrorists. Why, for instance, does the resolution omit the 2008 serial bombings, allegedly carried out by two Christian terrorist outfits, targeting Hindu Diwali celebrations? Or the serial bombings, for which the Indian Mujahideen have claimed responsibility, in Mumbai in 2010; the Hindu holy city, Varanasi, in 2011; and the Mahabodhi Temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Bodh Gaya in 2013, to name only a few?
2. H. Res 417 calls to empower religious minority courts to conduct trials and hear appeals. This suggestion undermines the very nature of the Indian judicial system, which like the American system, is secular. Would the sponsors of the resolution ever suggest race or religion based courts in the United States? Have they made such recommendations for religious minorities in countries such Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or Malaysia, where religious minorities struggle to find justice in majority-religion courts?
3. H. Res 417 continues to hold Chief Minister Narendra Modi responsible for the 2002 violence in Gujarat while disregarding the findings of the Indian Supreme Court's Special Investigative Team (SIT) that absolved Modi of complicity. Moreover, the resolution omits the findings of the SIT which uncovered that some advocates for the Muslim community deliberately falsified evidence and concocted macabre incidents of violence. The resolution attempts to undermine the credibility of the secular Indian judicial system by, once again, inserting statements that highlight a biased, arguably Hinduphobic view.
4. H. Res 417 ignores India's unprecedented religious accommodations for minorities, while singling out Freedom of Religion or "anti-conversion" laws, which were created to protect poor and vulnerable populations from predatory efforts seeking religious conversion in exchange for educational, medical, and other humanitarian aid. India spends almost \$200 million to subsidize the Hajj pilgrimage for Muslims, provides minority religious institutions freedom from government intervention (while denying Hindu institutions the same privilege), and maintains generous affirmative actions programs in most states for religious minorities.

We respectfully request that you **rescind co-sponsorship** of H.Res 417. Should you need further clarification on any of the above points, please contact us at jay@hafsite.org or 202-223-8222.

Thank you,
The Hindu American Foundation