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MEMBER ALERT: OCTOBER 2018

AHC SUPPORTS STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSION IN LAW SUIT AGAINST HARVARD



This month, American Hindu Coalition (AHC) joined a rally in Boston protesting against Harvard University's racial quotas victimizing talented Asian Americans in the college admission process.

AHC strongly supports the Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. (SFFA) in the law suit against Harvard University. AHC joined Asian Americans For Education (AACE) and other organizations in co-signing the *amicus brief* in SFFA's law suit against Harvard University. Two AHC Executive Committee members, Dr. Ajay Kothari and Manga Anantmula, also serve on the AACE Board.

SFFA filed the law suit against Harvard University in November 2014. SFFA has alleged that the university has “employed and are employing racially and ethnically discriminatory policies and procedures in administering the undergraduate admissions program at Harvard College in violation of the civil liberties of Asian Americans.”

Prior to signing the *amicus brief* in the law suit and joining as a coalition partner of AACE, AHC surveyed its membership. American Hindu Coalition is an advocacy organization with a political and government reform agenda based on the Hindu Enlightenment Principles. Specifically, the core value of good citizenship are hard work and striving for excellence in education and in self-improvement. Consequently, it is imperative that the college admission process stop using an



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arbitrary racial quota system in the name of campus diversity. All students must be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. A highly competitive college admission process, such as with Harvard University, that is the aspiration of ambitious students everywhere, should not use racial quotas. Asian-American students, who constitute a significant applicant pool in the selection process at elite colleges, are particularly impacted by the invisible racial quotas that ultimately decide whether they get a fat envelope of acceptance or a thin envelope of rejection. Many Asian Americans are also wary of the historical discrimination that their ancestors have suffered in America in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The AHC membership, comprising of Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, are proud Americans with ethnic heritage from South Asia, South East Asia, Middle East, Caribbean, and Europe. Some AHC members are also practicing Catholics, Protestants, and Jews who subscribe to Hindu Enlightenment Principles. The AHC membership is united by their shared values and agreement that diversity makes America strong. However, AHC members also believe that race as a primary factor in college admission is a poor method of deciding the inclusivity and the diversity of a student body. Rather, elite colleges should do more to recruit in economically disadvantaged communities that are also historically discriminated such as African Americans, Chicanos, and Native Americans. Elite colleges should also do more to recruit from economically disadvantaged communities that are not historically discriminated such as in Appalachia.

Currently, elite colleges are using arbitrary racial quotas based on the US Census tabulated population demographics. In the Census tabulation, "Asian Americans," who are a racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse population, are lumped into a single US Census category. AHC members have noted that the "Asian American" racial category does not speak to either their individual or their American-identity. A few AHC members have also noted that, due to the increased awareness of the racial-bias against Asian Americans, many high school students who are multi-racial choose to identify as "white" or "black" in the college admission process. They know that either the "white" identification (i.e. a statistically dominant census category) or the "black" identification (i.e. a historically discriminated race) increases their chances of being admitted to an elite college such as Harvard.

An extreme case is where students choose to lie about their racial identity in order to gain admission to an elite college. Vijay Jojo Ingam (né Vijay Chokaliingam), brother of actress Mindy Kaling (né Vera Mindy Chokaliingam), is an Indian American Hindu who joined the SFFA law suit to protest the racial quotas victimizing Asian Americans. Ingam, in his book titled *Almost Black*, describes how, between 1998 and 1999, he "shaved [his] head, trimmed [his] long Indian eyelashes, and applied to medical school as a black man." He asks: "Would you rather accept



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racism or defy those who want to discriminate against you? I chose the latter and applied to medical school as black.” He was accepted by St Louis University Medical School in Missouri. He later dropped out, after changing his mind about pursuing a career in medicine, and pursued a career in business.



Pictured Left-Right: Vijay Jojo Ingam, AHC’s Manga Anantamula, SFFA President Edward Blum, AACE President Yukong Zhao

SFFA President, Edward Blum, has welcomed AHC participation as a coalition partner: “We at SFFA are grateful for the support of AHC in our lawsuit challenging Harvard's discriminatory admissions policies against Asian-Americans” and

organizations such as AHC that have co-signed the *amicus brief* have “played an important role in fostering Asian-American awareness of the unfair and illegal admissions practices of America's competitive universities.”

For more information on the American Hindu Coalition (AHC) and how you can join our effort on this and many other issues, please reach out to Anna Ahlund, AHC Public Affairs Coordinator: Phone - (202) 790-1512; Email - contact@americanhinducoalition.com