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**DEMOCRAT AND REPUBLICAN AHC MEMBERS  
EXPRESS CONCERN AT THE POLITICAL BACKLASH  
AGAINST A HINDU AMERICAN NOMINEE IN VIRGINIA  
FOR STANDING UP FOR MERIT-BASED EDUCATION**



**Richmond, Virginia** -- In a 22-18 vote, the Virginia State Senate failed to confirm the nomination of Suparna Dutta by Governor Glenn Youngkin to the Virginia Board of Education, with Democrats comprising the majority of the Virginia Senate.

In the lead-up to the state Senate vote, led by Virginia State Sen. Ghazala Hashmi, members of the Hindu American community, who are largely registered Democrat, were particularly

vexed by unsubstantiated character assassination against Suparna as well as racial and religious slurs against Hindu Americans generally, chastising Dutta as a “religious extremist” aligned with “extreme and right-wing white supremacist groups,” in a campaign proliferated on social media largely by anonymous activist trolls.

American Hindu Coalition (AHC) Chairman Shekhar Tiwari observed today: “With so many in our community who are educators and academics, our core value is to support excellence in public education, regardless of race, religion, and economic class, particularly for gifted and talented children. Suparna’s appointment to the State School Board furthers this core value into education policy choices that impact young lives. There is no doubt that this very core value is a reason why Hindu Americans lead the economic growth engine in Northern Virginia.”

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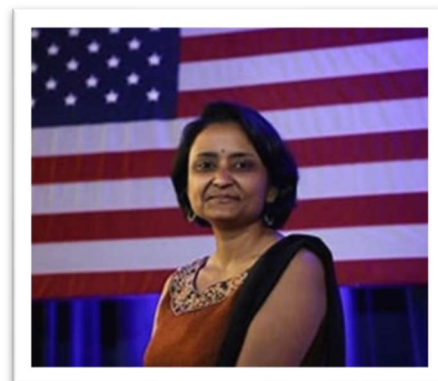
American Hindu Coalition is a 501(c)(4) national, nonpartisan grassroots advocacy organization representing Americans who believe in Hindu Enlightenment Principles and upholds the commitment of American Hindus for a more prosperous, safer, and a stronger America.

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Suparna, AHC's Director of Education Platform Committee, is a founder of the Coalition for TJ (or Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology), a community organization (comprised of parents who are both Democrats and Republicans) that successfully sued the Fairfax County School Board in federal court for removing the school's merit-based admissions test and replacing it with an anti-Asian process. Notably, the federal court ruling called out the Fairfax County School Board officials for its animus against Asian American students.



Asra Nomani, a former Wall Street Journal reporter and co-founder of Coalition for TJ who is an Indian American Muslim supporter of AHC, remarked: "What is troubling to me is that State Senator Ghazala Hashmi, an Indian American Muslim, stepped forward for the Democrats to deliver the xenophobic invective against Suparna's confirmation on the Virginia Senate floor. Exploiting the perception of old-world communal rivalry for political gains is appalling."



Chairman Tiwari commented: "Our membership, both Democrats and Republicans, is really surprised that a last-minute social media campaign succeeded in derailing Suparna's confirmation on the Senate floor even after the Senate Committee, Elections & Privilege (with review jurisdiction for nominations), approved, unanimously and bipartisan, Suparna's confirmation the week before."

Chairman Tiwari added: "Governor Glenn Youngkin won his 2021 election largely because of his education platform, which was partly formulated by the American Hindu Coalition. We were proud of Suparna, as she was the only one of the Governor's five nominees on the State School Board who regularly defended the Governor's education platform. She earned the ire of opponents because of her outspokenness on merit-based education. I am very concerned that the Hindu American community in Virginia is the victim of an undeserved political backlash for doing the right thing."

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