

Hello and Namaste

My name is Ajay Vangapaty, a Hindu American resident of Oregon for more than a decade, and a father of two young Hindu Americans. I have been active in several community oriented service activities such as [Sewa Diwali](#) where Hindu Americans raised more than 40,000 lbs of food to support local food pantries over the last three years around the Metro Portland area for the benefit of all those who rely on meals from food pantries. I truly cherish the diverse background that we are lucky to live in and raise our children so they have a more accepting worldview than generations past. I am writing to you today however to voice a concern regarding some potential new appointees in the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA.)

Hindu Americans are already a micro minority in America as well as Oregon who hardly have a seat at the table when discussing matters that affect our community and now I see that the two recommended names for OCAPIA are Aparna Rajagopal and Padma Akkaraju both of whom claim to be our voice. However, both of them have direct involvement with an organization called Hindus for Human Rights (HfHR). Sadly this organization has a track record of always being anti-Hindu and never actually standing up for Hindus or the human rights of Hindus.

This is their track record:

1. HfHR opposed a religiously persecuted refugee settlement act presented in India which was to merely fast-track the refugee applications of religiously persecuted groups looking to desperately escape on going genocide in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh of Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis, and Jews and hopefully find a safe haven in India.
2. HfHR was at the forefront supporting an extremely violent anti-Hindu seminar called Dismantling Global Hindutva. For your reference, Hindutva literally means the essence of being Hindu. This conference was essentially about how to uproot Hindus from societies in America and Europe and purge those societies simply because of our faith and our choice to practice our faith.
3. HfHR has been advocating campaigns like Holi against Hindutva. Once again using one of our favorite festivals to attack us and talk about a violent dismantling of our community.
4. Lastly, I heard they were targeting the removal of the lone Hindu member in OCAPIA, Hiral Pandya and after digging a little further I was shocked to learn they are doing similar things with any Hindu trying to enter the civic domain as a representative of our already extremely underrepresented community throughout America.

To say the least, I am very concerned about Aparna Rajagopal and Padma Akkaraju and their parent organization HfHR indirectly coming into active politics that too at the state level which will have a direct impact on so many Hindu American families.

I fear that in the already troubling times where we are battling White Supremacy, Anti-Asian hate, do we really want to empower peddlers of Hinduphobia to unleash their plan to uproot us from our lives as contributors of this beautiful society we call Oregon. I am putting my trust in the leadership of the state and its representatives at all levels and I hope you will really have the best interest of Hindu Americans.

I sincerely and humbly request you reject the appointments of Aparna Rajagopal and Padma Akkaraju and rather make space at the table for more diverse individuals who have a track record of serving the community here.

Thank you

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Ajay