

109<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 396

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should address the ongoing problem of untouchability in India.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 27, 2006

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. WOLF, Mr. TANCREDO, and Mr. PASTOR) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, Government Reform, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should address the ongoing problem of untouchability in India.

Whereas the United States and the Republic of India have entered an unprecedented partnership;

Whereas the July 18, 2005, Joint Statement between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that, “[a]s leaders of nations committed to the values of human freedom, democracy, and rule of law, the new relationship between India and the United States will promote stability, democracy, prosperity, and peace

throughout the world [. . . and] it will enhance our ability to work together to provide global leadership in areas of mutual concern and interest”;

Whereas caste is the socioeconomic stratification of people in South Asia based on a combination of work and descent;

Whereas the “Untouchables”, now known as the Dalits, and the forest tribes of India, called Tribals, who together number approximately 250 to 300 million people, are the primary victims of caste discrimination in India;

Whereas discrimination against the Dalits and Tribals has existed for more than 2,000 years and has included educational discrimination, economic disenfranchisement, physical abuse, discrimination in medical care, religious discrimination, and violence targeting Dalit and Tribal women;

Whereas Article 17 of the Constitution of India outlaws untouchability;

Whereas despite numerous laws enacted for the protection and betterment of the Dalits and Tribals, they are still considered outcasts in Indian society and are treated as such;

Whereas the Dalits and Tribals are denied equal treatment under the law;

Whereas the National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has declared that many of the reported cases of atrocities against Dalits and Tribals end in acquittals;

Whereas Dalit women are often raped with impunity;

Whereas low-caste unborn females are targeted for abortions;

Whereas most Dalits and Tribals are among those poorest of the poor living on less than \$1 per day;

Whereas most of India's bonded laborers are Dalits;

Whereas Dalits and other low-caste people are denied equal access to education;

Whereas the Dalits and Tribals maintain higher illiteracy rates than non-Dalit populations;

Whereas the public education afforded Dalits and Tribals, when available at all, is usually inadequate and conducted in regional languages or Hindi, thereby disqualifying them from access to India's public universities which teach in English, and from most government positions and most advanced jobs in India, which require English;

Whereas the HIV/AIDS epidemic in India is massive and underreported;

Whereas the United Nations estimates that approximately 50 million Indians will die from HIV/AIDS in the next 40 years;

Whereas Dalits and Tribals are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS and are the largest high risk population in India;

Whereas a rise in religious conversion in response to caste discrimination has led to violence against religious minorities and is further perpetrated by organizations seeking the promotion and protection of caste;

Whereas the Vishva Hindu Parishad ("VHP") and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ("RSS") have been among the organizations perpetrating violence against religious minorities; and

Whereas the VHP and RSS have directly and indirectly financially supported the campaign of violence against religious minorities in India and have distributed weapons for use against religious minorities: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that, as the  
 3 leaders of the United States and the Republic of India  
 4 have expressed commitment to the values of human free-  
 5 dom, democracy, and the rule of law, it is in the interests  
 6 of the United States to address the problem of the treat-  
 7 ment of the Dalits and Tribals in India in order to better  
 8 meet mutual economic and security goals by—

9           (1) raising the issue of caste discrimination and  
 10       untouchability through diplomatic channels both di-  
 11       rectly with the Government of India and within the  
 12       context of international bodies;

13           (2) inviting Dalit organizations to participate in  
 14       the planning and implementation of development  
 15       projects from the United States Agency for Inter-  
 16       national Development and other United States devel-  
 17       opment organizations;

18           (3) prioritizing funding for projects that posi-  
 19       tively impact Dalit and Tribal communities, specifi-  
 20       cally projects that implement quality English-based  
 21       education for the Dalit and Tribal communities;

1           (4) ensuring that cooperative research programs  
2 targeting rural health care, the HIV/AIDS epidemic,  
3 and rural technology contain proper focus on the  
4 Dalits and Tribals;

5           (5) encouraging the World Bank and other rel-  
6 evant international financial institutions to consider  
7 caste discrimination when forming and funding de-  
8 velopment projects;

9           (6) ensuring that all United States Government  
10 employees and contractors in India—

11           (A) are aware that it is United States Gov-  
12 ernment policy that caste discrimination is un-  
13 acceptable, and that the United States is com-  
14 mitted to eliminating it; and

15           (B) treat all people equally, with regard to  
16 caste discrimination;

17           (7) ensuring that—

18           (A) qualified Dalits are in no way discour-  
19 aged from applying for employment with the  
20 United States Government or United States  
21 Government contractors in India, and that  
22 transparent and fair recruitment, selection, and  
23 career development processes are implemented,  
24 with clear objective criteria; and

1 (B) procedures exist to detect and remedy  
2 any caste discrimination in employment condi-  
3 tions, wages, benefits or job security for the  
4 employees of the United States Government or  
5 United States Government contractors in India;  
6 (8) encouraging United States businesses to—  
7 (A) afford Dalits and Tribals equal oppor-  
8 tunity in hiring;  
9 (B) actively recruit and train Dalits and  
10 Tribals;  
11 (C) pay Dalits and Tribals a fair wage;  
12 and  
13 (D) adopt voluntary employment guidelines  
14 to foster the elimination of caste discrimination;  
15 (9) discussing the issue of caste in the context  
16 of congressional delegations; and  
17 (10) monitoring the activities and funds of the  
18 Vishva Hindu Parishad and Rashtriya Swayamsevak  
19 Sangh in the United States that are used to support  
20 groups that have perpetrated acts of violence against  
21 Dalits, Tribals, and religious minorities in India.

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