



Ambedkar King Study Circle

California, USA

www.akscusa.org | akscsfba@gmail.com



Date: Sep-06-2023

Urging Governor Mr. Newsom to Sign SB 403 into Law.

Dear Governor Mr. Newsom,

We hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits.

Please receive the below letter of support signed by teachers, students and researchers in Support of California SB 403. This initiative has been curated by America Against Caste Discrimination (AACD), a formidable alliance of over 20 organizations ardently dedicated to advancing the cause of social justice.

We are writing to express our strong support for California Senate Bill 403 (CA SB 403) and to urge you to sign it into law.

Sincerely,
Member Organizations of AACD.

Teachers, Students and Researchers in Support of California SB 403

Caste discrimination is widely practiced in South Asian communities, including in the US diaspora. California Senate Bill 403, introduced by Senator Aisha Wahab, strengthens civil, legal protections against caste discrimination in the domains of housing, employment, and education. By naming caste explicitly as a protected category, the bill facilitates both the prevention and the remediation of caste based discrimination. Those affected by caste oppression will now have access to the same investigatory procedures and remedies that already apply to those who are affected by race, color, citizenship, religious, gender, and other oppressions.

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Many institutions across the United States have already introduced caste as an explicitly protected category—from labor unions, to universities, to tech companies, to municipalities. Passing CA SB 403 in California would allow state bodies to investigate and address caste-based discrimination in California more effectively, improving the lives of residents and bringing us one step closer to equal opportunity.

Sadly, opponents of the bill have responded to it with an especially disingenuous argument. Without evidence or explanation, they claim that this bill—which simply makes explicit that caste is a protected category in California law—will somehow lead to the unfair targeting of South Asians.

Such claims are a transparent attempt to twist and distort the language of social justice. As activists and scholars have explained time and time again, protections against caste discrimination no more ‘target’ South Asian community members than protections against anti-Black racism ‘target’ non-Black community members, or protections for the disabled ‘target’ the able. These laws require investigatory processes and do not assume the fault of any individual or group prior to an investigation.

As teachers, students and researchers, it is our responsibility to do more than discuss discrimination and oppression in our classrooms and in our academic work. We must bring our analysis to bear on the concrete historical moment, and tangibly support the work of social movements to dismantle oppression.

By signing on to this statement and educating ourselves and our peers, we can send a strong message to the California Senate and the wider public, that we fully support CA SB 403.

Sincerely,

- 1) Ajantha Subramanian, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- 2) Akhil P. Veetil, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- 3) Ameen Perumannil Sidhick, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- 4) Amulya Mandava, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- 5) Anindita Chatterjee, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.
- 6) Annapurna Waughray, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK.

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- 7) Anuj Vaidya, UC Davis, Davis, CA.
- 8) Anupama Rao, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- 9) Anuradha G. Advani, Power in Language Tutoring, LLC, Palo Alto, CA.
- 10) Apurva Ashok Prasad, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- 11) Ashwin Rajadesingan, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX.
- 12) Ashwini Shridhar, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.
- 13) Balmurli Natrajan, William Paterson University of NJ, Wayne, NJ.
- 14) Bharat Rathod, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA.
- 15) Bonnie Zare, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg VA.
- 16) Gajendran Ayyathurai, Göttingen University, Göttingen, Germany.
- 17) Gaurav Pathania, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA.
- 18) Hanna Dangiapo, California Lutheran University, Oxnard, CA.
- 19) Jeremy Rinker, University of North Carolina Greensboro, Greensboro, NC USA.
- 20) Jiya Pandya, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
- 21) K Satyanarayana, Univ of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- 22) Kavya Srikanth, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.
- 23) Kunal Palawat, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.
- 24) Lalit Khandare, Pacific University, Eugene, OR.
- 25) Lalita du Perron, Stanford, Stanford, CA.
- 26) Lisa Mitchell, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- 27) Madhura R, University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, CA.
- 28) Manpreet Newsom, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA.
- 29) Marie David, West Contra Costa Unified School District, Richmond, CA.
- 30) Meghraj Khinchi, Kings college london, London.
- 31) Paula Chakravartty, New York University, New York, NY.
- 32) Poojit Hegde, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.
- 33) Poorvesh Dongre, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- 34) Pratyush Bharati, University of Massachusetts Boston., Boston, MA.

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- 35) Radhika Marwaha, UC San Diego, San Diego, CA.
- 36) Rahul Parson, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.
- 37) Raina Bhagat, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL.
- 38) Ramnaryan S Rawat, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.
- 39) Riya Desai, University of California, San Francisco, Oakland, CA.
- 40) Rupa Viswanath, University of Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany.
- 41) Sangida Akter, University of Maryland, College Park, College Park, MD.
- 42) Sapna Chopra, California State University Fullerton, Fullerton, CA.
- 43) Sayan Bhattacharya, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.
- 44) Shaashi Ahlawat, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- 45) Shahnaz Habib, The New School, New York.
- 46) Shailaja Paik, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA.
- 47) Shakthi Karthikeyan, Foothill High School, Pleasanton, CA.
- 48) Sharika Thiranagama, Stanford, Stanford, CA.
- 49) Shiksha Modi, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- 50) Snigdha Kumar, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, MN, USA.
- 51) Suraj Yengde, Oxford / Harvard, Oxford.
- 52) Surya Bandela, UC Riverside, Riverside, CA.
- 53) Tom Armbruster, Ph.D., San Marino High School, Emeritus, Orange, California.
- 54) Vidhya Shanker, Interdependent Researcher/ Evaluator, Collective Knowledge Works, Co., Minneapolis, MN.
- 55) Vishal Jamkar, University of Minnesota, Saint Paul, MN.
- 56) Vy Cao-Nguyen, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX.

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Member Organizations of America Against Caste Discrimination

- 1/ Ambedkar International Center (AIC)
- 2/ Ambedkar International Mission (AIM)
- 3/ Ambedkarite Buddhist Association of Texas (ABAT)
- 4/ Ambedkar King Study Circle (AKSC)
- 5/ Amnesty International USA
- 6/ Bhim International Foundation, USA
- 7/ Boston South Asian Coalition
- 8/ Boston Study Group
- 9/ Coalition of Seattle Indian Americans
- 10/ Dalit Solidarity Forum
- 11/ Dr B.R. Ambedkar Educational Aid Society
- 12/ Federation of Indian American Christians of North America (FIACONA)
- 13/ Great Truth
- 14/ Hindus for Human Rights (HfHR)
- 15/ India Civil Watch International (ICWI)
- 16/ Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC)
- 17/ Office of Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant
- 18/ Periyar Ambedkar Study Circle
- 19/ Periyar International
- 20/ Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Bay Area
- 21/ Socialist Alternative
- 22/ South Asian American Coalition to Renew Democracy
- 23/ South Asian Left Activist Movement
- 24/ Workers Strike Back

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