

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2026

Director Kash Patel
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Director Patel:

We write to urge the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to investigate the attempted mass shooting at the Sri Venkateswara Swami (Balaji) Hindu temple in Aurora, Illinois, as a potential federal hate crime, and to assess whether any additional federal charges are warranted. We also request information about the Bureau's efforts to identify and address credible online threats targeting Indian Americans, Hindu Americans, and other South Asian communities, including Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Jews, and Christians. All people deserve to practice their faith freely and safely, without fear of violence or intimidation.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program defines a hate crime as a criminal offense "motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias(es)" against a protected characteristic, including race, religion, or ethnicity. The Program specifically recognizes anti-Asian and anti-Hindu bias categories, and the allegations in this case warrant a thorough examination of potential racial, ethnic, and religious bias.¹

According to prosecutors, Alexandros Paporakis, a 19-year-old resident of Palatine, Illinois, drove to the temple on October 11, 2026, intending to carry out a shooting but fled after his rifle malfunctioned. Statements issued by the Palatine Police Department, Mount Prospect Police Department and the FBI's Chicago field office said he was arrested that same day and subsequently charged with making a terrorist threat and unlawful possession of weapons. Prosecutors allege that he authored an eight-page manifesto expressing white supremacist views and describing violence against people of Indian descent at a Hindu house of worship.² Investigators stated that they recovered a rifle, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, body armor, and white supremacist imagery. The alleged combination of targeted racial hatred, a religious setting, and preparations for mass violence demands a comprehensive federal response. We appreciate the FBI's reported assistance to local investigators and urge the Bureau to ensure that potential hate-crime violations receive explicit attention.³

This alleged plot comes amid a documented rise in online hostility toward Indians and other South Asians. In September 2026, the Center for the Study of Organized Hate identified more than 542,000 anti-South Asian hateful posts on X between January 2025 and June 2026. The monthly volume increased from 12,904 posts in January 2024 to 43,843 in June 2026, a rise of approximately 240 percent.⁴ The Carnegie Endowment

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Hate Crime Statistics* (online at <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/more-fbi-services-and-information/ucr/hate-crime>).

² *Palatine police say mass shooting plot thwarted, possibly targeting Aurora house of worship*, ABC 7 Chicago (Oct. 14, 2026) (online at <https://abc7chicago.com/post/palatine-man-alexandros-paporakis-19-arrested-charged-making-terrorist-threat-alleged-aurora-mass-shooting-plot-police/19938541/>).

³ *Police: Palatine man was plotting mass shooting at Hindu temple*, Daily Herald (Oct. 14, 2026) (online at <https://www.dailyherald.com/20261014/crime/police-palatine-man-was-plotting-mass-shooting-at-hindu-temple/>); *India 'Deeply Concerned' Over Foiled Illinois Temple Shooting Plot, Flags Rising 'Anti-India Hate' In US*, The Wire (Oct. 15, 2026) (online at <https://thewire.in/world/india-appreciates-timely-action-as-man-arrested-for-planning-mass-shooting-at-hindu-temple-in-us>).

⁴ *Anti-South Asian 'hate speech' on X surges by 240%, US report finds*, Al Jazeera (Sept. 28, 2026) (online at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/9/28/anti-south-asian-hate-speech-has-exploded-online-in-us-new-report-finds>).

for International Peace’s 2026 Indian American Attitudes Survey found that 48 percent of respondents encountered racist posts targeting Indians or Indian Americans very or somewhat often since the start of 2025. The nationally representative survey of 1,000 Indian American adults also reported: “Since the start of 2025, one in four respondents have been called a slur.”⁵ These findings underscore the importance of examining whether online threats and extremist networks are facilitating targeted violence.

We are also deeply concerned that communications from the administration have risked amplifying, rather than rejecting, hostility toward these communities. On September 9, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a graphic depicting a Sikh man with the message, “Get off our roads, you don’t know how to drive Mr. Singh.” The New York Times reported that DHS removed the post the following day after criticism that it stigmatized Sikh Americans; DHS maintained that the image referred to a particular individual accused in a fatal crash.⁶ Separately, the Department of Education posted “Make College Football Great Again” after Texas Republican Bo French complained about the presence of South Asians at a University of Texas football game.⁷ We believe such messaging risks lending governmental legitimacy to racial and religious stereotyping. Federal agencies should make clear that debates over immigration or public safety never justify collective suspicion of Indian, Sikh, Hindu, or other South Asian communities.

Accordingly, we request a written response addressing the following questions, to the extent consistent with an ongoing investigation, by October 29, 2026:

1. Is the FBI investigating the alleged Aurora-area plot as a potential federal hate crime? If so, is that investigation examining both racial or ethnic bias and religious bias, and is the Bureau coordinating with the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division and the appropriate U.S. Attorney’s Office?
2. Are investigators examining whether the defendant used online platforms to communicate threats, select potential targets, obtain assistance, or coordinate with others? Are they assessing whether any individuals encouraged or materially assisted the alleged plot?
3. What steps is the FBI taking, consistent with the First Amendment and applicable investigative authorities, to identify and assess credible online threats targeting Indian Americans, Hindu Americans, Sikhs, and other South Asian communities? How does the Bureau distinguish protected expression, including offensive speech, from threats and conduct warranting investigation?
4. What mechanisms exist for sharing actionable threat information with state and local law enforcement and potentially targeted houses of worship? What outreach and protective resources are being offered to affected communities following this alleged plot?
5. Does the FBI have adequate personnel, language expertise, and analytical capacity to assess threats involving anti-Indian, anti-Hindu, and broader anti-South Asian bias? What additional resources, if any, does the Bureau believe it needs?

⁵ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Indian Americans in a Time of Turbulence: 2026 Survey Results* (Feb. 19, 2026) (online at <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/02/indian-americans-in-a-time-of-turbulence-2026-survey-results>).

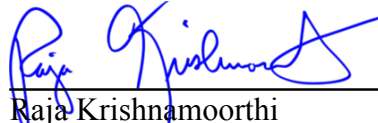
⁶ *D.H.S. Takes Down Post Depicting Sikh Trucker and Optimus Prime*, New York Times (Sept. 10, 2026) (online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/10/us/politics/dhs-sikh-optimus-prime.html>).

⁷ *Anti-South Asian ‘hate speech’ on X surges by 240%, US report finds*, Al Jazeera (Sept. 28, 2026) (online at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/9/28/anti-south-asian-hate-speech-has-exploded-online-in-us-new-report-finds>).

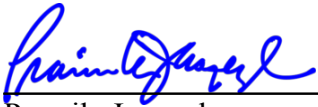
No one should fear being targeted because of their ancestry, appearance, or faith, and no congregation should have to wonder whether gathering for worship will make its members targets of mass violence. We urge the FBI to investigate the evidence fully, pursue all applicable offenses, and provide affected communities with a clear account of the steps being taken to protect them.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



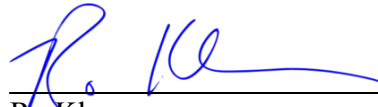
Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



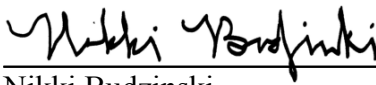
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



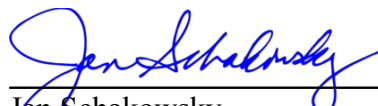
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



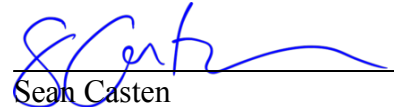
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



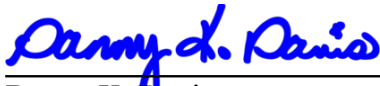
Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



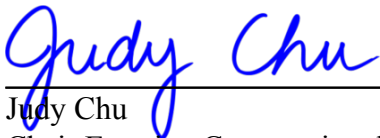
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



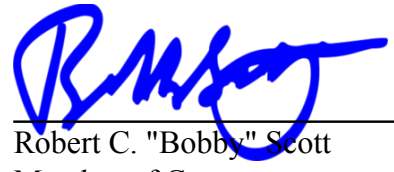
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Chair Emerita, Congressional
Asian Pacific American Caucus
(CAPAC)



Dave Min
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



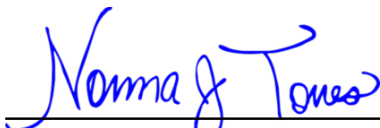
Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



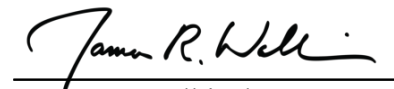
André Carson
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



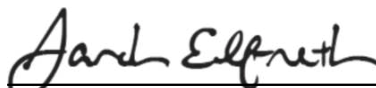
MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



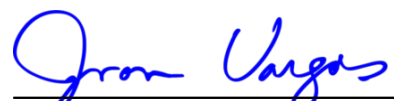
James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



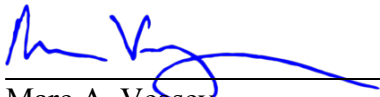
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



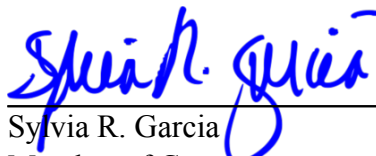
Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



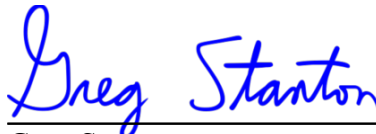
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



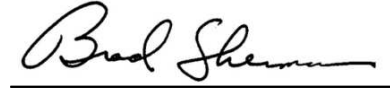
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



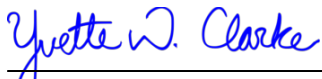
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



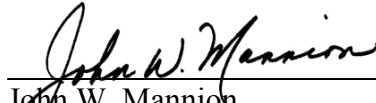
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



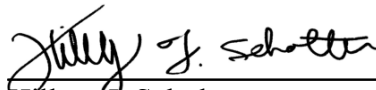
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



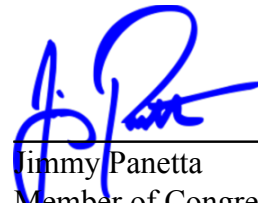
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



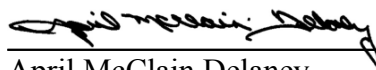
Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



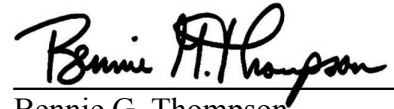
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



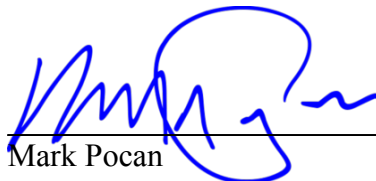
April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



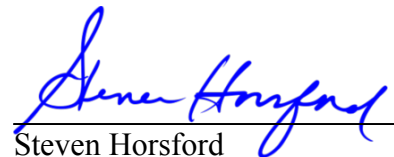
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



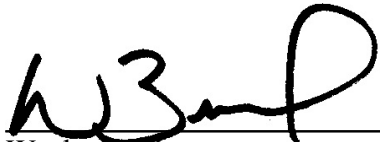
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



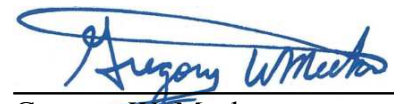
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



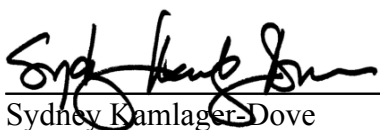
Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



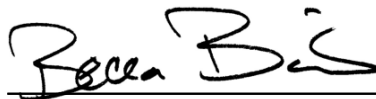
Analilia Mejia
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



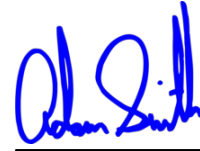
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



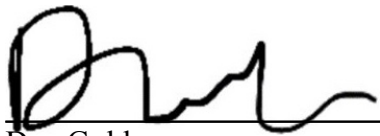
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



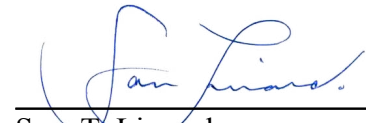
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress



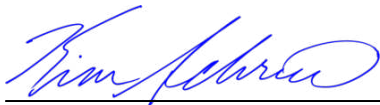
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



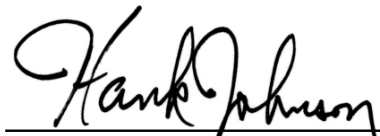
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



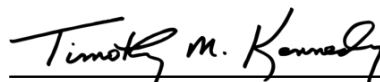
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



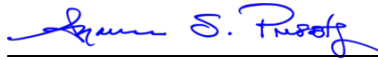
Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



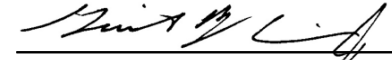
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



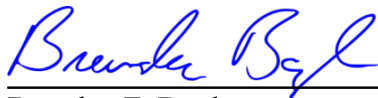
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress