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**SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN POLICY AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SAAPRI)
AND SIKH RELIGIOUS SOCIETY (SRS) COMMEMORATE
ILLINOIS HOUSE RESOLUTION 1193 ON DECEMBER 16**

Chicago, IL – South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI) and Sikh Religious Society (SRS) located in Palatine commend the Illinois House of Representatives for adopting House Resolution 1193 (HR 1193), addressing violent attacks on Sikh Americans, Muslim Americans, and other minorities and denouncing hate crimes and hateful political rhetoric. On Sunday, December 16, 2012 at 11:00 a.m., community members and elected officials will commemorate HR 1193 at the SRS Gurdwara Sahib, 1280 Winnetka Street in Palatine, Illinois.

“SAAPRI has appreciated the opportunity to take a lead in providing community input in the drafting of this resolution, and we look forward to working with the Illinois legislature on additional measures that promote tolerance and keep our community safe,” said Ami Gandhi, executive director of SAAPRI.

“The Sikh American community of Chicago appreciates Illinois Representative Daniel Biss and SAAPRI for taking the initiative to make this happen, and I am proud to say that I am a Sikh by faith and a proud American. We welcome everyone to join us on December 16 to commemorate this historic resolution,” said Rajinder Singh Mago, who serves on the Public Relations Committee of SRS and is also a trustee emeritus of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions, founded in Chicago in 1893.

“I was extremely saddened and disappointed to hear about the recent acts of violence against the Sikh and Muslim communities. Hateful actions like these are meant to make people of different religions and races feel isolated and marginalized. I wanted to put forth this resolution to let members of the Sikh and Muslim communities know that we stand with them, that we support them, that we are proud that they are part of our communities and that we will not tolerate this violence against them,” said Illinois Representative Daniel Biss, a chief co-sponsor of HR 1193.

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“It is imperative that we send a message that hate crimes and intolerance are not acceptable in our society. We all need to persevere and demonstrate our strong voices together on this issue must prevail if we are to have the kind of world that we dream of for ourselves and our children and grandchildren,” said Illinois Representative Lou Lang, also a chief co-sponsor of HR 1193. SAAPRI and SRS also commend Representatives Cassidy, Harris, Jakobsson, Nekritz, Crespo, Williams, and Mussman, who served as co-sponsors, as well as Chicago Aldermen Ameya Pawar and Joe Moore who introduced a similar resolution at the city level in September.

SAAPRI and SRS value the contributions of numerous community organizations and individuals in the aftermath of the recent tragedies, including Apna Ghar, Asian American Institute, Council on American-Islamic Relations, Chicago Chapter (CAIR-Chicago), Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, Shoulder-To-Shoulder interfaith organization, Sikh Coalition, and Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, South Asian Americans Leading Together, and United Sikhs. “We are excited to work with our state legislators, faith-based groups, and policy organizations to promote tolerance and counter bigotry,” said Rabya Khan, staff attorney at CAIR-Chicago. “This legislation is an acknowledgement of the racially motivated atrocities that have been committed and a commitment by the state of Illinois to devote resources to educating the greater Illinois community on Sikh Americans and South Asian Americans,” said Ekta Arneja, Midwest regional coordinator of United Sikhs.

The event on December 16 at 11:00 a.m. is open to the public and will take place at a *gurdwara*, a Sikh place of worship and community center. The event will be followed by *langar*, a community kitchen vegetarian meal. Upon entering the gurdwara, visitors should remove their shoes and cover their heads. Visitors are requested to bring a handkerchief, bandana, or headscarf to cover their heads; extra scarves may be available for visitors to borrow. Modest and comfortable clothing is recommended, as attendees will sit on the carpeted floor. Chair seating is available for elderly or disabled visitors. Alcohol, tobacco, and smoking materials are prohibited on the gurdwara premises.

SAAPRI is a non-profit, non-partisan organization established in 2001 to improve the lives of South Asian Americans in the Chicago area, by using research to formulate equitable and socially responsible public policy. The text of HR 1193 is available at www.ilga.gov and www.saapri.org.

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