



**SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN POLICY AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SAAPRI)
RECOMMENDATIONS TO FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
ADVISORY POLICY BOARD**

December 15, 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI) thanks the Advisory Policy Board of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for the opportunity to provide recommendations regarding the collection and reporting of statistics on hate crimes, particularly due to the rising impact of hate crimes in South Asian American and other communities. SAAPRI urges the federal government to take increased measures to gather and disseminate data on hate crimes in the United States. The United States is built on inclusion, plurality, and diversity, and actions of hate and bias affect all Americans.

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 recommendations. SAAPRI's work has included research and policy initiatives on hate crimes, civic engagement, access to health care, economic development, and the experiences of immigrants. SAAPRI appreciates the opportunity to submit a brief statement today and can provide additional data and details upon request.

II. IMPACT OF HATE CRIMES

Hate crimes and hate groups continue to be a serious threat facing this country. The aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, has caused Sikhs, Muslims, South Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and other communities in the Midwest and the country at large to live under an unfair burden of vulnerability. The recent tragic shooting at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin has brought attention to this serious issue, but unfortunately this is not an isolated incident. In Illinois, there have been many direct attacks on individuals of various races and faiths, including numerous violent attacks on Muslim institutions in the past few months alone. Incidents directed at South Asian Americans may appear to be random and isolated, but when they are viewed collectively over a period of time, a troubling pattern emerges that justifies enhanced actions by government.

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Hate crimes affect not only individuals but also communities: trauma is incurred by survivors and the community being targeted, who hear the message that they do not belong in this country. These messages of intolerance, xenophobia, and racism are a threat to our society as a whole. Hate crimes are also a threat to law enforcement officers and government institutions, who are sometimes in the direct line of fire when there are attacks by hate groups and domestic extremists.

Meanwhile, groups such as South Asian Americans are growing at a rapid rate. According to the United States Census, the South Asian American population in Illinois has grown by over 55% since 2000. Due to the increasing populations of immigrants and minorities in many parts of the United States, it is crucial that government leaders take measures to protect our communities and promote tolerance of diverse cultures and religions. In order for such outcomes to be achieved, it is crucial for the federal government to expand and improve categorization, reporting, and disaggregation methods and enhance participation, training, and education of law enforcement.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the grave threat currently posed by hate crimes to minority communities and all Americans, it is imperative that the government take strong measures to prevent, document, investigate, and combat hate crimes. History has shown us the past efforts led by the highest levels of government have been pivotal in setting a framework to combat hate crimes.

In the current climate, government actions and political discourse shape the public's perception of racial and religious minorities. Locally, this has been demonstrated by the recent passage of Chicago Resolution R2012-814 and Illinois House Resolution 1193, denouncing hateful actions and rhetoric and promoting education about diverse cultures and religions. Both initiatives had broad support not only by the South Asian American community, but also by a variety of organizations and individuals of diverse races and religions. When the government takes actions to protect diverse groups and promote inclusiveness, this advances our country's ideals of fairness and equality, and it makes us stronger as a nation.



As detailed in submissions and recommendations by South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT), we request the FBI to expand and improve categorization, reporting, and disaggregation of hate crimes, especially in light of the history of hate crimes against South Asian, Sikh, Muslim, and Arab Americans over the past decade. We also request the Department of Justice (DOJ) to enhance the participation, training, and education of law enforcement in collecting data. We understand that, in order for these activities to be successful, there must be a collaborative effort between the federal government and the impacted communities. We look forward to continued collaboration with law enforcement and government officials in order to prevent future hate crimes.