

For Immediate Release
October 7, 2014

USHA Appeals to the Governor of New York to Halt the Appointment of Preeta Bansal to the Court of Appeals

October 7, 2014 – Atlanta - The United States Hindu Alliance (USHA) appealed to the Governor of New York today not to appoint controversial attorney Preeta Bansal to the Court of Appeals.

USHA has already initiated a petition drive to campaign against the candidacy of Preeta Bansal. In addition to the petition, Indian Americans in the state of New York and beyond will be calling the office of Governor Cuomo to express their strong opposition to Bansal's candidacy.

Preeta Bansal is an experienced attorney, who has served as the Solicitor General for the State of New York. But the well-known Indian American was Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom when she courted controversy. In 2005, she represented the body and aggressively championed the cause of denying a visa for Mr. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India (then Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat). Although there was no evidence to substantiate the allegations against Modi, Bansal carried out the task of persuading the State Department to deny a visa to Modi. In the recommendation letter submitted to the DOS, it was clearly stated that the approach pursued by the USCIRF under her leadership was to set a new precedent in combating rights violations around the world. However, neither before that submission nor thereafter, has a single foreign government official been given a similar treatment. In a world where persecution of religious minorities is an every day phenomenon, the Commission in its infinite wisdom had determined that Narendra Modi is the only leader who merits such a special treatment despite his never having engaged in any persecution of religious minorities. Bansal, as Chair of the Commission, played the most crucial role in denigrating Narendra Modi, and insulting the Hindu and Indian American communities, as well as the people of India.

Although she had several choices before her, she opted for the easy way out. She placed her own selfish interests over and above that of the community, which she was expected to represent. The community has never forgiven her acts and she has never apologized for her irrational and arbitrary behavior. In the meantime, Narendra Modi was subjected to intense and politically motivated scrutiny based on allegations that were never supported by facts. After 12 years of exhaustive investigations, none of India's constitutional bodies have found him guilty of any crime. Not only he had won three consecutive state elections, despite India's highly prejudiced media and political opponents, India's voters elected him as the Prime Minister of the largest and most vibrant democracy in the world this year. At a time when US India relations is about to see significant improvement, the decision of the Governor will be watched not only in the US, but also in India. "We sincerely hope that Governor Cuomo will do what is right for New York and the United States of America", said Gokul Kunnath, USHA President.

Note: The United States Hindu Alliance (USHA) is a national non-profit advocacy organization of Hindus to protect and promote the interests of Hindus worldwide. For more information, please visit www.ushaonline.org.