

# For Immediate Release

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## USHA Pays Tribute to Swami Vivekananda and Appeals to Tulsi Hubbard to Invite Narendra Modi to Address a Joint Session of the US Congress

October 28, 2013 - Atlanta: The United States Hindu Alliance paid tribute to Swami Vivekananda on the occasion of his 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary yesterday at the Sumant Cultural Center within Shree Shakti Mandir.

The event began with a welcome by noted social worker and USHA treasurer, Dr. Sujatha Reddy. This was followed by Bharat Natyam dance performances by students of Chandrika Chandran, Kathak dance performances by students of Kumud Savla and a Kuchipudi dance on Sri Krishna by acclaimed dancer Sasikala Penumarthi. The cultural program ended with a Vande Mataram dance by students of Chandrika Chandran.

Dr. Basant Tariyal, a member of the USHA Board of Governors, spoke of Vivekananda and the work of USHA. Consul General of India inaugurated the event and quoted from Vivekananda's historic speech at the World Parliament of Religions held in 1893. He also shared the various efforts taken by the Government of India to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary such as the establishment of a Chair at the University of Chicago in the name of Vivekananda and the tribute ceremony held by India's Ambassador in Washington, D.C. Pratibha Tripathi, former anchor of CNN Headline News, who is the first Hindu to be an anchor of a major television news network, spoke of the difficulties she encountered during her career in journalism.

Gokul Kunnath, President of USHA spoke about Swami Vivekananda and his role in empowering Hindus every where, spreading freedom around the world, challenging exclusivity, intolerance and fanaticism in the name of religion and creating greater respect for science. He asked every Hindu to learn more about the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda so that empowered Hindus can lead the world.

He also appealed to Hon. Tulsi Gabbard, the first Hindu elected to Congress, to initiate efforts to have a bipartisan resolution inviting Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat, to address the joint session of the US Congress. Citing the example of Britain, an ally and a country which shares the same democratic values as the US, Kunnath asked the US to follow suit. He also reminded that as India rises to the position of a super power, the United States should treat India with respect.

Ravi Jaishankar, national President of Hindu Students Council introduced the Chief Guest, Honorable Tulsi Gabbard. He talked about the enormous significance of empowering Hindu youth and what the election of the first Hindu to Congress means to young Hindus. Hon. Tulsi Gabbard, who delivered the keynote address at the event, began with the greetings of Namaste, Aloha and Jai Shri Krishna and spoke of her political journey from Hawai'i to Washington. She cited the Bhagawat Gita as a source of inspiration for whatever she had done in life. Following the path of Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga with sincerity created a balance in life even while she was in the war zone in Iraq. She was given a standing ovation at the end of her inspiring speech.

More than 30 Hindu organizations of Atlanta supported USHA to make the Tribute to Swami Vivekananda event a great success.

**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](http://www.ushaonline.org).