

Subject: Stand for Human Rights. Vote Yes on ordinance to Ban Caste-Based Discrimination
Date: Monday, February 13, 2023 at 9:56:30 AM Pacific Standard Time
From: Gaurav Sabnis <gsabnis@stevens.edu>
To: LEG_CouncilMembers <council@seattle.gov>
CC: Stone, Meredith <Meredith.Stone@seattle.gov>

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Council members

I am Dr. Gaurav Sabnis, Associate Professor of Marketing at the School of Business, Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken NJ.

I write to you as an American citizen of Indian origin hoping to raise awareness about caste based discrimination that is rampant in much of the world and also in the United States.

I write to you today, seeking your support for the Seattle City Council's proposed ordinance to ban caste-based discrimination in the City of Seattle. I stand in solidarity with South Asian and other immigrant community members and all working people.

Caste is a systematic method of marginalization and exploitation of groups of people based on their birth. In that sense of its discriminatory characteristics, caste shares a lot in common with race. In fact, oppressed caste people in our South Asian diaspora face double discrimination owing to their intersectionality of being one marginalized minority within another.

While caste originated in and is still most prevalent in South Asia, decades of South Asian migration into America has, as would be expected, ensured the equally successful migration of the caste system and caste-based discrimination as well. Instances of egregious caste-based discrimination in the US are rising, such as the ongoing [lawsuit against technology giant Cisco](#) case, [United States v. Lakireddy Bali Reddy](#) case, [the BAPS case](#), to name a few.

The stories from the subsequent testimonies from witnesses and survivors of caste-based discrimination (collected by [Ambedkar King Study Circle](#) and [Equality Labs](#)) tell us of an urgent need to protect this axis of discrimination. Existing legal protections are inadequate to protect caste-based discrimination given the victim's intersectionality of marginalization and that their discrimination happens at the hands of the people of their same race.

Contrarian views would hold that such a law would be anti-Hindu. Nothing could be further from the truth - caste cuts across religions and the protection would apply to oppressed castes of Hindus and non-Hindus alike. Another contrarian claim is that such a law would unfairly target Indian or South Asian communities. That would be as laughable as saying sexual discrimination laws unfairly target men or that transgender protection laws unfairly target cisgendered people.

Seattle has the fastest growing South Asian population of any city in America, and

