



*We uplift the lives of marginalized through education and Health*

## **Immediate Press Release:**

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Ambedkar Association of North America (AANA) strongly encourages the Seattle City Council to officially recognize “caste” as a protected category, urgently.

Caste is a global reality and unfortunately, caste-based discrimination is still rampant globally. In 2020, State of California sued a large corporation, Cisco Systems, in 2020 of allowing caste-based discrimination to happen within its workforce. Furthermore, in 2000, a California resident, Lakireddy Bali Reddy was indicted for trafficking and abusing several caste oppressed minor girls from India. Reddy did so knowing the girls were from a caste oppressed community. This case led to changes in California’s human trafficking laws in 2005.

Seattle is home to a growing South Asian community, many of whom are from caste oppressed backgrounds. The discrimination and human rights abuse that caste inflicts on these individuals in South Asia is now, unfortunately being observed right in Seattle and all over USA.

The civil rights movement for caste protections is growing nationwide. Several American academic institutions like Harvard University, California State University, Brandeis University, UC Davis have added caste protections and affirmed their commitment to supporting caste oppressed students. It is now time for city councils to and other legislative bodies to recognize caste and put protections in place for caste oppressed individuals. Seattle City Council, with its history of championing labor rights, human rights and equity for all, can and must lead the way and show that it cares for this growing minority. AANA is thankful to the Seattle City Council for its willingness to take this historic step. We are confident that the council will pass such a resolution quickly and once again, champion human rights.

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