File #: Res 31926, **Version:** 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION reaffirming Seattle as a welcoming city, expressing the Seattle City Council's solidarity with Seattle's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste, and opposing India's National Register of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Act.

WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council supports democratic rights for all peoples, and opposes religious and ethnonationalist discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the far-right Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been criticized for promoting violence against religious minorities, silencing dissent, and actions which earned Prime Minister Modi the nickname "the Butcher of Gujarat," a reference to the 2002 massacre - when Narendra Modi was Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat - in which an estimated 2,000 people were killed in anti-Muslim violence, and many Muslim women were targeted for rape and other forms of sexual violence; and

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2019, the Indian parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which the BJP government claims will help refugees fleeing religious persecution from neighboring countries, but which blatantly discriminates, allowing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) to be updated for citizenship based on religion, favoring Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian immigrants, while excluding Muslim people; and

WHEREAS, the CAA is the first instance of religion being used as a criterion for Indian citizenship; and

WHEREAS, in August 2019, Modi's right-wing government published an updated NRC, requiring nearly two million people in the northeastern state of Assam to prove with documentary evidence their Indian citizenship or face detention at mass prisons and detention camps that the Indian government has begun

to build and fill; and

WHEREAS, most Indians lack documentation such as birth certificates to prove citizenship, and a nationwide expansion of the NRC could strip hundreds of millions of people (disproportionately Muslim, oppressed castes, women, indigenous and LGBT communities) left out of the CAA of their citizenship rights with no option to be re-naturalized; and

WHEREAS, the New York Times reported on December 22, 2019 that "The Indian home minister, Amit Shah, has vowed in speeches to expand the checks used in Assam to other states and then use the citizenship law to purge India of 'infiltrators' and 'termites'"; and

WHEREAS, protests in India against the CAA and the NRC in December 2019 have faced repression including reports that in the state of Uttar Pradesh police fatally fired live ammunition at demonstrators and arrested thousands, and reports that police smashed up Muslim homes in in cities such as Bijnor, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Sambhal, Firozabad, and Rampur; and

WHEREAS, on January 8, 2020, ordinary people across India demonstrated against the policies of the Modi government, with protests against the CAA and NRC in conjunction with a one-day strike called by ten trade unions opposing privatizations and neoliberalism and also in conjunction with strikes and demonstrations in rural communities against the oppression and exploitation of farmers, showing that a united movement of working people has the potential power to resist and defeat authoritarianism; and

WHEREAS, the general strike in India on January 8, 2020 was the largest strike in the history of the world, with an estimated 250 million workers, farmers, and rural laborers stopping work, and joining protests against poverty, exploitation, discrimination, and authoritarianism; and

WHEREAS, in September 2019, President Trump hosted a "Howdy Modi" rally in Houston alongside Prime Minister Modi, in what the Washington Post ominously reported was, "the largest-ever gathering with a foreign political leader in the United States," demonstrating the growing threat of far-right politics around the world; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council believes it is the duty of ordinary people to oppose the dangerous rise of the far right everywhere in the world, and believes that the rapidly expanding authoritarianism of the Modi government in nuclear-armed India is of concern, not only to the millions of Muslims, oppressed castes, women, indigenous, and LGBT people in India, but also to Seattle's South Asian immigrant community and those opposed to Trump and the right wing in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Indian American Muslim Council, API/Chaya, Tasveer, SABAH (South Asians Building Accountability & Healing), Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle and thousands of activists and organizers have spoken out in Seattle against the CAA and NRC; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the CAA and the NRC are inconsistent with Seattle being a welcoming city, for South Asian communities of all castes and religions, and proclaimed September 24, 2019 to be Stand with Kashmir Day, Clerk File 321438, in response to the Modi government stripping India's only Muslim-majority state, Jammu and Kashmir, of its autonomy; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THAT:

Section 1. The Seattle City Council reaffirms Seattle as a welcoming city and expresses solidarity with Seattle's South Asian community regardless of religion and caste.

Section 2. The Seattle City Council opposes the National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship Amendment Act in India, and finds these policies to be discriminatory to Muslims, oppressed castes, women, indigenous, and LGBT people. The Seattle City Council urges the Parliament of India to uphold the Indian constitution by repealing the Citizenship Amendment Act, and to stop the National Register of Citizens, and take steps towards helping refugees by ratifying various UN treaties on refugees.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2020, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2020.

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President _____ of the City Council

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2020.

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Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)