



Legislation Text

File #: 59455, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No appropriation required.

Title

Affirming the principles of fundamental human rights and equality for people of Kashmir and encouraging Congress to call for the Indian government to conduct an independent and thorough investigation of all human rights violations in Kashmir.

Body

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2019, the Government of India suspended Article 370 of its Constitution, thereby revoking the long-protected, semi-autonomous status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir without consulting Kashmiri political or civil society leaders; and,

WHEREAS, this anti-democratic action was preceded by a surge of roughly 35,000 Indian forces into the already heavily militarized region of Jammu and Kashmir and the imposition of a total communications blackout across the region, including cellular networks and internet connectivity; and,

WHEREAS, roughly 7 million Kashmiris were cut off from such services for nearly six months and where, finally, partial access to the internet has been restored. All this has had a severe impact on the ability of the media to investigate conditions on the ground. The few reports that have emerged have been uniformly disturbing, including: mass detentions of thousands of citizens, elected officials, doctors, lawyers and civil society leaders. And there have been accounts of the use of lethal force against civilians, dwindling supplies of life-saving medical treatments and the inability of patients to access hospitals, along with the curtailment of religious freedoms; and,

WHEREAS, children have borne the brunt of these actions, with reports of families unable to secure baby food and formula for infants, students prevented from attending school, and Kashmiris as young as 12 facing serious injuries from Indian forces and indefinite detentions without any charges; and,

WHEREAS, Kashmiris remain largely cut off from each other and the outside world while their families around the world, including Kashmiri-Americans in Madison, are barely able to contact them and ensure their safety and well-being; and,

WHEREAS, activists across the United States and the planet have been mobilizing in solidarity with the people of Kashmir, and on the weekend of September 21-22, 2019, a series of peaceful protests were held to mark Day 50 of the communication blackout in Kashmir; and,

WHEREAS, these demonstrations, coordinated by the coalition "Global Standout for Peace in South Asia," took place in Boston, Seattle, the San Francisco-Bay area, and Houston, as well as in Kolkata, India, Gothenburg, Sweden, Islamabad, Pakistan, and Kathmandu, Nepal; and,

WHEREAS, several locally based organizations have similarly declared solidarity with the movement for peace in Kashmir, including We are Many-United Against Hate, and the Muslim Student Association of UW-Madison; and,

WHEREAS, the Madison Common Council goes on record stating its severe concern for the developments in Kashmir and declaring its solidarity with the Kashmiri people, specifically the Madison Kashmiri community,

that they may soon be able to contact their families, friends and loved ones without any hostility from the Indian government,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Madison affirm the principles of fundamental human rights and equality for people of Kashmir and forward suitably engrossed copies of this resolution to the Office of Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson and Representative Mark Pocan, encouraging them to call for the Indian government to conduct an independent and thorough investigation of all human rights violations in Kashmir, on behalf of the Common Council.