December 11, 2020

The Honorable Taranjit Singh Sandhu  
Ambassador of India to the United States  
Embassy of India to the United States  
2107 Massachusetts Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Sandhu:

I write as a staunch supporter of the U.S.-India relationship, and as someone who believes that our shared democratic identity and values are the strongest basis for continuing to grow our relationship. The right to peacefully express concerns to one’s government is a fundamental democratic value, and I urge the Indian government to respect that right as farmers and other demonstrators peacefully make their voices heard.

Following the passage of new farming legislation, hundreds of thousands of farmers peacefully expressed their opposition to the laws. Unfortunately, some law enforcement officers responded to their nonviolent protests with force. These measures shocked me as well as some constituents in New Jersey whose loved ones are involved in the protests.

The United States government has certainly had its own challenges with use of force against peaceful protesters, including earlier this year. At the time, I spoke out strongly against these abuses. Furthermore, countless Americans responded by doubling down on their support for peaceful protest and freedom of expression. I hope that the Indian people and government are able to do the same.

As Indian farmers and their supporters continue expressing their opposition to these laws, whether through protests, strikes, or other nonviolent methods, I urge the Government of India to respect their right to peacefully voice their views. The Indian people and government will determine the path forward on these laws, and as in all democracies, that determination should result from a constructive dialogue.

Ties between the United States and India have grown significantly in recent years due to our shared values and the vibrancy of the Indian-American diaspora. I am committed to seeing U.S.-India ties continue to grow, and in the spirit of those shared values I hope that the Indian Government supports the rights of the farmers and their supporters to peacefully express their views.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez  
Ranking Member