The Honorable Taranjit Singh Sandhu  
Ambassador of India to the United States  
Embassy of India to the United States  
2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20008  

Dear Ambassador Sandhu,

The United States and India share a long history as strong allies and partners on the world’s stage. We are bound together through our commitment to individual freedom, our dedication to tested democratic principles and our conviction that all men and women are afforded fundamental human rights. As a new Member of the United States Congress, I have a deep appreciation for the relationship that has been built between our two countries over the last 74 years and I look forward to being supportive of U.S.-India relations both now and in the future.

Over the past several months, it has been reported that farmers across India have peacefully protested and respectfully demonstrated their opposition to new legislation and public policy that will affect the agricultural sector of India’s economy and ultimately impact their businesses and livelihoods. I, as a legislator, respect the right of the government to set their own domestic policy. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, as the two houses of India’s bicameral Parliament, have the authority to propose and set policy as they see fit.

However, it is of great concern to hear of the government of India taking drastic measures to silence and squash the voices of the opposition as they exercise their right to protest and peacefully assemble in a democratic society. Reports of incarcerations and arrests without due process, violent police action against nonviolent demonstrators, charges of sedition against journalists and politicians, and the disappearance of individuals in the wake of the Republic Day demonstrations are actions that are not in line with the values of the world’s most populous democracy.

I have the honor and privilege to be representing many proud Indian Americans that now call Long Island home. They have a deep concern for their ancestral home and many of them fear for the safety and wellbeing of their relatives and loved ones who remain citizens of India and are rightfully participating in these exercises of freedom. On behalf of my constituents, I ask you as an agent of the government of India to please extend their thoughts and wishes to the authorities to protect the rights of all citizens and to restore order by protecting all citizens from harm and violence.

Preserving a democratic republic is more than just enacting laws and representing the will of the majority, it also requires protecting and defending the rights of the minority to exercise and share their thoughts and beliefs freely and without persecution. The United States and India have an obligation under our constitutions to see that all citizens are afforded the rights and freedoms that we hold so dear. I respectfully urge the Indian government to seek a diplomatic and peaceful resolution to allow farmers and farm workers the opportunity to make their voices heard.

Sincerely,

Andrew R. Garbarino  
Member of Congress