

## Team IAALV

### Executive Committee 2016-17

**President:** Arun Kumar  
**Vice President:** Rajib Baruah  
**Secretary:** TBF  
**Asst Secretary:** TBF  
**Treasurer:** Kangan Soni Beraj  
**Asst Treasurer:** TBF  
**Editor:** TBF  
**Asst Editor:** Sudhakar Neti  
**Webmaster:** Vijay Gandhinagar  
**Coord. Tech.:** TBF  
**Radio Program Coordinators:**  
Jay Bhasker (WMUH FM 91.7)  
Heman Patel (WDIY FM 88.1)  
**Prgm. Adv.:** Payal Suratwala  
**Program Dir.:** Shikha Sood  
**Asst Pgm. Mgr.:** Joya Baruah  
**Program Managers:**  
Firuzi Desai  
Bindu Jain  
Sneha Kulkarni  
Shraddha Shrivastava  
**Members at Large:**  
Bama Bhashyam  
Samrat Jain  
Ashok Khandelwal  
Minal Patel  
Cindy Sookram  
Dharam Sookram  
**Coord. Road Clean:** Bala Rao  
**Asst Coord. Road Clean:** TBF  
**Coord. AESP & Youth Adv.:**  
Nitin Laud  
**Youth Creative Director:**  
Mrunalini Govande  
**Youth Coordinators:**  
Shaumik Phadke; Sailee Rane  
**Editorial Board Youth:**  
Priyanka Bhashyam  
Aryaman Khandelwal  
**Photographer:**  
Sampath Govindasamy  
**Ex-Officio:** Aparna Bharath

### IAALV Board 2017-18

**Chairperson:** Ashim Bhowmick ...  
**Secretary:** Bharat Bhatt  
**Members:**  
Radha Devani, General  
Supriyo Dey, Programming  
Sandeep Dhareshwar, Com  
Relations  
Arvind Mathur, Investments  
Sudhakar Neti, Constitution  
C.D. Pandya, Auditing & City Rel.  
Deepak Sharma, Legal Counsel  
Arun Kumar, Ex Officio PPresident



## Indian-American Association of Lehigh Valley

A non-profit, tax exempt organization: Tax ID# 23-2159173  
PA Bureau of Corporations & Charitable Organizations Entity # 651358  
P. O. Box 3575, Allentown, PA 18106-0575

[www.iaalv.org](http://www.iaalv.org)

April 7, 2017

The Honorable Charlie Dent  
United States Congressman  
3900 Hamilton Boulevard, Suite 207  
Allentown, PA 18103

### RE: Concerned Indian-American Citizens of the Lehigh Valley

Dear Congressman Dent,

Please be advised that I serve as legal counsel for the Indian-American Association of the Lehigh Valley ("IAALV"). Founded in 1972, the IAALV is a non-profit organization serving and representing over 7,000 Indian-Americans in the greater Lehigh Valley region. The IAALV is integral to maintaining cultural, educational, social and community service for not only our own members but for the community at large. We are not a political organization, but part our mission is to develop and foster working relationships with political leadership to address certain issues of importance.

As you are surely aware, the results and sentiments of our latest Presidential election appear to have spurred a wave of several racially motivated crimes across our country. While such hate crimes are certainly not a new phenomenon, we as a country have recently witnessed a string of alarming incidents particularly aimed against people of South Asian descent. The recent spate of violence in 2017 is rightfully linked to the hateful rhetoric and racist policy that we believe the current Presidential administration has perpetrated.

Over the span of just two weeks there have been four such attacks, two of which were fatal. These violent incidents in Kansas, Washington, South Carolina and Florida all targeted Indian-American men. The shootings in Kansas and Washington were preceded by the assailant shouting: "Go back to your country!" The perpetrator in Florida believed he was targeting an Arab and was mad

*A non-profit social, cultural, educational & community service organization  
Serving Lehigh Valley Americans of Indian descent & the community at large  
An award winning organization - founded 1972*

for “what they are doing in the Middle East”. The victims, Srinivas Kuchibhotla, Deep Rai and Harnish Patel, did absolutely nothing to provoke these attacks.

The difference between these recent hate crimes and those of the past (for example, post-9/11), is that for the first time in several generations we are beginning to question whether America will remain the same beacon of hope and opportunity for immigrants as it was when many IAALV members and/or their parents immigrated to this country. Indian-Americans are now the second largest group of immigrants per year after Mexican-Americans. We fear the President is trying to create a new America where racial hostility may once again be normalized and institutionalized – whether he is the product or the cause of this movement is debatable.

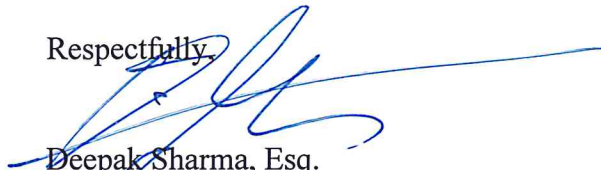
Of course, Indian Americans are not alone in suffering a recent wage of discrimination, hate and violence. Women, African-Americans, Latino-Americans, Asian-Americans, Jewish-Americans, Muslim-Americans and members of the LGBTQ community, to name a few, have all been attacked and vilified. Although our judiciary has blocked the proposed “Muslim Ban”, the damage from such a proposal and hateful rhetoric continues to be felt. People of all races, ethnicities, etc... must band together in an effort to develop a long-term infrastructure and legal framework for a sustained and systematic response to not just every hate crime, but every policy that tends to promote intolerance. As stated by New York Congresswoman Grace Meng: “It remains critical for elected officials to speak out early, loudly and often against hate violence and policies that fan the flames of violence.”

Under federal law, a hate crime is committed when the crime is motivated by the victim's real or perceived race, color, religion, national origin. Such acts can include but are not limited to physical assault, property destruction, criminal trespass, terroristic threats and harassment. When such acts are perpetrated, it is incumbent upon our law enforcement officials and prosecutors to recognize any possible indicia of a hate crime and fully investigate any potential matter as such. It is essential to maintaining the spirit of our Constitution and American freedom that our elected officials remain immune to the current wave of nationalistic rhetoric and racial intolerance that is becoming endemic in certain segments of our society.

On behalf of the IAALV, I hereby request the honor of your cooperation to bring these issues to the forefront in Pennsylvania. As IAALV’s legal counsel, I and other IAALV board members would appreciate a press conference to be hosted by your office expressing to the citizens of our district that we stand united against hateful bigotry.

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,



Deepak Sharma, Esq.  
Florio, Perrucci, Steinhardt & Fader, LLC



cc: The Honorable Bob Casey, Jr.  
The Honorable Pat Toomey  
Mr. Ashim Bhowmick  
Ms. Carol Halper