

Talking Points for encouraging your Congressional Representative to join US Congressional Bangladesh Caucus

Involve yourself and invite your friends also to contact their respective Congressional Representatives to thank them, if they are already members of the Bangladesh Caucus, and invite them to join, if they are not. Ask the Representative to contact Mr. Gregg Sheiowitz of Congressman Joe Crowley's office for Caucus membership. You may use some or all of the points below in your letter. If you do not know your Congressional Representative, you can look up at www.house.gov. A sample draft letter is available at http://www.bafi.org/caucus/write_rep.pdf

Importance of Bangladesh to US

- Bangladesh is strategically located between India and Myanmar (Burma), with potential for being an important transit point for trade activities.
- The economic and social indicators have improved significantly, with United States support, to the extent that its micro credit and adult education programs have been replicated in other countries including the US.
- Increasingly, the US-Bangladesh relationship has grown into one based on trade and investment. However, Bangladesh remains a net exporter but with the growing middle class in a country of 140 million, export opportunities for the US is also growing.
- As the largest Muslim country with a working democracy, Bangladesh needs our support through increased trade and investment to sustain and deepen democratic practices and principles.
- More importantly, Bangladesh is an ally in the fight against international terrorism.

Bangladeshi-American Community

- Relatively small size (about 350,000) but are significantly above average in terms of educational and professional achievements and household incomes (see http://www.bafi.org/community/community_profiles.asp).
- The community is making significant contributions to the wider society: Census data show that Bangladeshi-Americans are mostly concentrated in medicine and University-level teaching.
- Bangladeshi-Americans are very well organized too, because of historical experiences -- in 1952, Bangladeshis had to organize to defend the right to use the mother tongue of the majority and, in 1971, had to organize to fight for Independence from Pakistan. Reflecting these experiences, there are about 300 organizations throughout the USA serving the cultural, social and professional needs of the community.
- An estimated 10,000 Bangladeshi-Americans are now involved in party activities with Republican and Democratic parties, concentrated mostly in the Democratic Party.