



# Ambedkar King Study Circle

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*The following statement, written by [Ambedkar King Study Circle](#), California, is released with the support of all the members of the [Savera](#) coalition.*

**For Immediate Release**

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## **U.S. Federal Court Delivers Landmark Judgment Affirming Civil Rights for the Caste Oppressed**

*The Court dismisses HAF's argument that caste protections infringe upon religious rights, rejects HAF's claim of representing all Hindu Americans, and affirms legitimacy and authority of the State to protect people against caste oppression.*

On Friday, July 18, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California, a Federal Court, issued a historic ruling that decisively upheld the California Civil Rights Department's (CRD) constitutional authority to defend caste-oppressed individuals through state action. The Hindu American Foundation had alleged that the CRD's enforcement of anti-caste policies violated the "constitutional rights of all Hindu Americans." The court dismissed the allegation, stating that HAF had neither standing nor any valid arguments to pursue the case. In particular, the judge noted the hypocrisy of HAF both claiming that caste is not integral to Hinduism, while also claiming caste-based protections infringe on Hindu religious rights.

This ruling is not only a legal win—it's a major victory for civil rights and social justice. [It delivers four critical outcomes:](#)

1. **Affirmation of CRD's Authority:** The Court reaffirmed that the CRD has the constitutional power to take legal action on behalf of caste-oppressed individuals facing discrimination.
2. **Recognition of the Legitimacy of State Action:** The Court stated plainly that CRD's litigation—such as in the Cisco case—is legitimate state action. It rejected the false claim that the department merely acted as a personal attorney.



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3. **Spurious Religious Freedom Argument Rejected:** The Court ruled that CRD's actions *do not* violate the religious rights, equal protection, or due process of Hindu Americans. It called HAF's argument "entirely unpersuasive."
4. **HAF's False Representation Exposed:** The Court rejected HAF's sweeping claim to represent "all Hindu Americans," noting the organization failed to demonstrate any actual activities, funding mechanisms, or engagement with the broader Hindu American community that would grant it standing in this case.

This July 18 judgment marks the dismissal of the Second Amended Complaint (SAC) filed by HAF and eight other individuals in September 2024 against Mr. Kevin Kish, Director of the CRD. A similar lawsuit filed in September 2023 was also rejected, though the plaintiffs were granted leave to amend. This time, the Court denied even that, writing that HAF's arguments were so poor that an amendment "would be futile in this case."

Karthikeyan Shanmugam, Convenor of Ambedkar King Study Circle (AKSC)—a California-based anti-caste and social justice organization—hailed the judgment as a major milestone.

"This is a historic win," said Mr. Shanmugam. "It affirms that caste discrimination is a civil rights violation and cannot be shielded by claims of religious freedom. The court's judgment makes it clear that enforcing civil rights laws does not infringe on religious liberty. This decision sends a strong message: caste-based exclusion and abuse have no place in our institutions, and those impacted can seek justice under the law in the USA."

Dr. Roja Singh, President of Dalit Solidarity Forum, stated:

"The decades-long campaign of caste-based oppression in the U.S. is finally being confronted. This ruling by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California affirms that caste discrimination violates civil rights and cannot be ignored. It marks a critical step toward ensuring that caste-oppressed communities can live and work with safety, dignity, and equality."

Vivek Kembaiyan, Western Regional Organizer at Hindus for Human Rights, added:



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“Hindu far-right groups have continued to weaponize the language of civil rights and religious freedom, but they continue to fail miserably in the courts. We are glad that these spurious arguments, borrowed from their friends in the broader far-right, continue to fall flat. The Hindu American Foundation and its right-wing extremist allies do not speak for Hindus, and their arguments that caste has nothing to do with Hinduism is dishonest and harmful. As Hindus, we must reckon honestly with the historical and ongoing harm that Hinduism’s violent caste system causes, which is why we support civil rights enforcement against caste discrimination.”

Jawad Ahmed, President of the Indian American Muslim Council, stated:

“This judgment is an important affirmation of what we all know: that CRD’s lawsuit was in pursuit of affirming civil rights and human dignity for all, and that no group should weaponize its identity to double down on systemic forms of oppression. The Indian American Muslim community continues to stand with Dalit and other caste oppressed communities in celebrating this judgment.”

This judgment is a beacon of hope—and a powerful message: caste discrimination has no place in any society that values civil rights and the rule of law.

