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Assemblymember Ash Kalra to Lead Historic California Delegation to India, First-Ever for State Assembly

SACRAMENTO – Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San Jose), who is the first Indian American elected to the State Legislature, will be leading the California State Assembly's first-ever delegation to India this month.

The historic two-week trade delegation, departing December 4, is sanctioned by Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood) and will take six legislators to New Delhi, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Mumbai and Punjab to discuss bilateral relations and have conversations on political, economic, and social developments in California and India.

"Our goal is to identify areas where California's and India's policy priorities align—with a special focus on tech's role in enhancing sustainability in agriculture, energy and transportation," said Assemblymember Kalra. "There is an opportunity here to continue to build long-term relationships between California and India, and explore ways we can work together to achieve our respective goals. In addition, there is strong interest in exploring how we can work together to ensure that, in a connected and tech-based world, democracy can still thrive."

The legislators from California who are part of the delegation are Assemblymembers Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters), Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica), Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton), Eloise Gómez Reyes (D-San Bernardino) and Mark Stone (D-Monterey Bay).

The delegation is expected to focus on three major issue areas: agriculture, technology and resilience, and citizenship in a digital democracy. Discussions will include how California's best practices in agriculture can inform India's own agricultural priorities, what the two bilateral partners can do collaboratively to advance targeted developments in tech to make communities more resilient and sustainable, and what technological changes mean for citizenship and civic engagement.

In recent years, South Asians have been one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States, increasing in population from 2.2 million in 2000 to 4.9 million in 2015. California alone has a community of more than a half-million Indian Americans, making the state home to the largest Indian American population in the country.

Assemblymember Kalra represents San José in the 27th Assembly District and previously served on the San José City Council, and was its first Indian American elected to the local office. Kalra currently serves as the Chair of the Assembly Aging and Long Term Care Committee and also sits on the committees on Education, Judiciary, Labor and Employment, and Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committees. In his first term, Assemblymember Kalra introduced a diverse range of legislation that includes resources for affordable housing, expanding protections for undocumented students in higher education, defending tenant rights, and addressing issues surrounding sustainability and conservation.

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