

TAKE ACTION -

Please take 5 minutes and follow these 4 simple steps to submit comments to the Governor of California via his contact form-listed below.

Background -

In June 2020, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (CDFEH) filed a lawsuit against technology giant CISCO Systems, alleging the company ignored a case of caste discrimination against an employee within their company. Whatever the individual merits of the case in question, the lawsuit is very troubling because of how it stereotypes and targets an entire minority group – Indian Americans and Hindu Americans - from all parts of the world. It furthers several racist and colonial tropes and makes sweeping generalizations about people based solely on their faith and country of origin.

CoHNA has [published a response](#) to the lawsuit and shared the same with Governor of Newsom, to whom this department reports. **We need your help to amplify the community response by submitting similar responses to the Governor.** Please ask your friends and family to do the same.

Step 1:

Click here (<https://govapps.gov.ca.gov/gov40mail/>). You should see a window like below.



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You may contact Governor Gavin Newsom by mail at:

Mailing address:
Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 445-2841
Fax: (916) 558-3160

Due to limited resources, responses to inquiries via mail may take longer than those submitted using the email form below.
Please note that we are unable to accept e-mail attachments because of the risk of Internet viruses; please send your attachments via traditional mail.

Contact the Governor

Purpose of communication: ☐ Have Comment ☐ Need Help

First Name:

Last Name:

E-Mail Address:

Please choose your subject:

Step 2:

Select “Have Comment”

Enter your name and email. A personal email is fine.

In the drop down menu titled “Please choose your subject”, select “Fair Employment and Housing”

Your filled out screen should look like this

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GAVIN NEWSOM**

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First Name:

Last Name:

E-Mail Address:

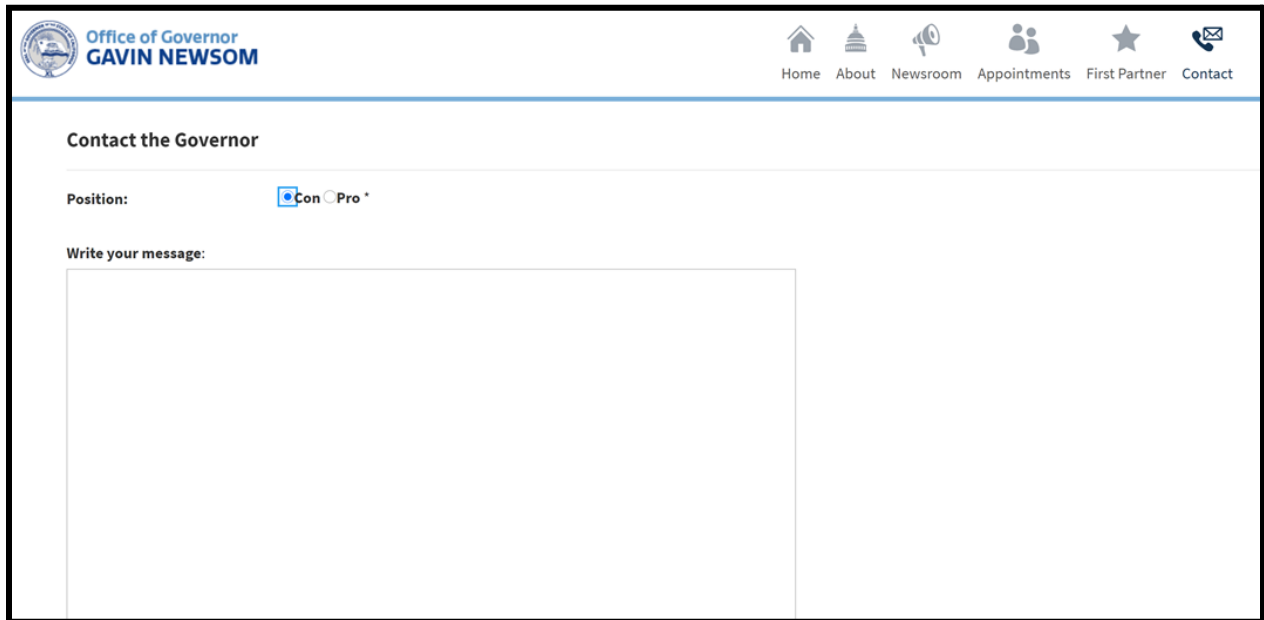
Please choose your subject:

Step 3:

Select the “Continue Button”

Once you hit submit, you should see a screen like this

Select “con” in the options below



The screenshot shows the 'Contact the Governor' form on the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom website. The header includes the governor's name and a navigation bar with links: Home, About, Newsroom, Appointments, First Partner, and Contact. The form itself has a title 'Contact the Governor' and a 'Position:' field with radio buttons for 'Con' (selected) and 'Pro'. Below this is a large text area labeled 'Write your message:'.

Cut and paste the text provided in red below. Feel free to change/customize the opening line. **If you prefer, you can customize or provide your own comments. Just be aware of the very strict limit on words/character.**

I am writing to protest against allegations made against my Hindu faith, by CDFEH in its lawsuit against Cisco. The case is very troubling in how it stereotypes and targets an entire minority group – Indian Americans/Hindu Americans. CDFEH needs to reconsider!

To be clear, this letter is not is not about the individual merits of allegations against the defendants nor is it defending social discrimination or atrocities that exist in Indian society. What concerns me is the use of this one case of alleged discrimination to generalize, tar and make broad assumptions about people based solely on their faith and country of origin.

CDFEH's lawsuit willfully propagates colonial myths around “caste” and makes sweeping claims about Hinduism discarding any pretense at dispassionate or fair analysis. The consequences are far reaching, with potential to single out and bring disrepute to this little understood indigenous religion.

For such actions to come from a state agency paid for by taxpayer money is doubly worrying. As a Hindu American I support CDFEH's pursuance of civil rights and equality, but also expect fair and equal representation.

CDFEH uncritically accepts and imposes a simplistic narrative of "caste" created by European Christian imperialists and furthered by missionaries + communists with anti-Hindu sentiments. "Caste" itself is a Portuguese word, not found in any of India's 20+ languages and meaningless in the context of Hindu scriptural evidence. It is the artificial conflation/amalgamation of a variety of concepts, US racial justice being the latest attempted addition.

"Caste" distinctions became central to a discussion of India only after the advent of colonial rulers, who needed to count, classify and simplify the nature and causes of wealth in India to better enable its exploitation. British rulers ignored the complex interplay between thousands of jatis (birth or occupation based clans) and idealized divisions of societal labor (the much discussed 4 varnas), conflating the two and replacing them with a rigid and simplistic overlay of "caste".

European colonialism also needed a narrative to morally justify the horrors it inflicted. "Caste" fit perfectly-helping to downplay the ills of contemporary British imperialists, who propagated the slave trade and mass exploitation via the indenture/bonded labor system. "Caste" also served as a rallying point for missionaries/evangelists who supported the colonial enterprise and used it to drive religious conversion.

Hindu history is rife with reformers who updated/revitalized it regularly. Its most popular/widely read books (Ramayana & Mahabharata), were authored by "lower caste" men. If "caste" prejudice were as strong as alleged, the writings and reform efforts of so-called "lower castes" would not have this enduring impact.

Modern India explicitly bans all forms of discrimination and empowers the historically disenfranchised. Today, India runs the world's largest affirmative action program with 60% of government job/higher-ed institutions reserved for deprived groups. Much of this can be attributed to Dr. Ambedkar, an iconic Indian leader.

Evidence of "caste" fluidity also comes from the varied jatis of the kings/dynasties that rose to power and ruled India over the centuries, just as they do today. Indian democracy is only 70 years old, yet already its current leadership, from its President and Prime Minister, has a plethora of members of the "lower castes". We similarly find revered Hindu religious and spiritual leaders, male and female, from all social backgrounds.

This does not mean there is no social or economic inequity in India. It simply means there's no systemic, theologically blessed system of Hindu oppression, based on birth alone. While highly condemnable, "caste" atrocities in India are largely about control of material resources, making it a socio/economic construct.

The premise of CDFEH's lawsuit is thus factually incorrect and extremely misleading. The pertinent question is: what does it say about the motivations or integrity of those who file such lawsuits in willful neglect of the complexities of the subject? Are they honest interlocutors seeking to further social integration and end discrimination? Or are they ideologically motivated miscreants, duping well-meaning people in the wider American society, by further mixing up U.S. based racial constructs with the colonial caste structure imposed on India?

You can read more about the problems underlying the CDFEH lawsuit here (<https://cozna.org/cdfeh-cisco-lawsuit>). Please read and ask CDFEH to reconsider!

Step 4:

Hit submit. You will get an online acknowledgment.

**Office of Governor
GAVIN NEWSOM**


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MESSAGE COMPLETE

You have successfully sent your message. [Click here to return.](#)

Thank you for the message - your feedback and ideas are a priority to me and my administration. Californians like you are helping us build an even stronger Golden State, and I thank you. Your comments are being reviewed by my staff. Please allow some time for us to get back to you as we build an inclusive, responsive, and people-powered government. I encourage you to revisit my website in the coming days to learn about what my administration is doing to keep our state moving forward and to expand opportunity to every Californian.

Thank you again for sharing your feedback and helping us shape California's future.

Sincerely,
Governor Gavin Newsom