

## **Rep. Sherrod Brown Discusses India-US N-Deal, Kashmir**

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By a Staff Reporter

Fremont, Ca. ----- Congressman Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, was welcomed by a large contingent of supporters at a luncheon at the home of Usha and Jeevan Zutshi in Fremont hills June 11.

He spoke for more than three hours on issues including the plight of Kashmiri Pandits and the proposed civilian nuclear agreement between India and the U.S., at a fundraiser organized by the Whittier, Calif. based Indian American Friendship Council.

Council Founder Dr. Krishna Reddy said Brown is a lawmaker whose positions on social issues agree with the majority. "He cares about India and is a very balanced politician," Reddy added.

Dr. Subroto Kundu, Kul Gupta and Ro Khanna emphasized the advantages of nuclear co-operation between the world's two largest democracies. Brown said he was positively influenced by their input and the audience's support - to the extent that any misgivings he seemed to have had about the pact appeared to have been removed.

Gaurang Desai and Gautam Desai lamented that almost 350,000 Pandits who have been forced to flee Kashmir since 1990 are still languishing in tents in the environs of Jammu.

Event host Jeevan Zutshi, founding member of Indo-American Kashmir Forum, pointed out that Brown was the "first U.S. lawmaker to condemn the human rights violations against this peaceful small intellectual community."

A series of resolutions recognizing the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits, signed by Congressman Joe Wilson, R-S.C, and Gary Ackerman, d-N.Y., were presented to Brown who immediately indicated his willingness to co-sponsor them. The resolutions condemn human rights violations against the Pandits, urge Pakistan to end cross-border terrorism, and encourage India and the state government of Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that Kashmiri Pandits are treated with dignity and allowed to return safely to Kashmir.

Dr. Vijay Chowdhury and Sunil Dhar, former directors of Kashmiri overseas association, described the miserable conditions in Pandit camps, a narration that seemed to especially move Brown's wife, Connie, who accompanied her husband to west coast.

Zutshi provided her with a copy of a report on camp conditions by Deepak

Ganju of Florida, the current national President of Kashmiri overseas association. Ganju recently spent April in Kashmir on a fact-finding mission. He also presented the couple with a second Annual Hindu Human Rights report on the status of Hindus in regions of South Asia where they are minorities. The report is titled, "Hindus in South Asia and the Diaspora: A Survey of Human Rights (2005)", was commissioned by the Hindu American Foundation, founded by Dr. Mihir Meghani, who supported the Brown fundraiser but couldn't be present due to some prior engagement.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Rahul Zutshi.