

# American Hindu Coalition launches Ambassador Circle event series

By - **Staff Writer** - August 4, 2017



*Members of American Hindu Coalition with Ambassador Anthony Phillips-Spencer, and his aides, in Washington, DC. (Embassy of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago)*

WASHINGTON, DC

The American Hindu Coalition (AHC) leadership met with Ambassador Anthony Phillips-Spencer of Trinidad and Tobago, last week, to invite him join the AHC Ambassador Circle – an initiative to

connect American Hindus who claim ethnic heritage from more than 15 countries in the world that have sizable Hindu populations. Phillips-Spencer accepted the invitation.

The AHC delegation was comprised of Shekhar Tiwari (Chairman), John Jagers (Board Member, Political), Alok Srivastava (Executive Committee, Chief of Staff), Nisha Ramracha (Youth Director), and Vincent Bruno (Northeast Regional Grassroots Director). A number of the ambassador's top aides also joined the meeting for a very productive discussion, according to a press release.

During the visit, Tiwari gifted a copy of the Bhagavad Gita to the ambassador. The AHC delegation learned that Trinidad & Tobago is home to nearly 300,000 Hindus who make up more than 20% of the population.

The nation's previous Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, is a practicing Hindu and was the first female prime minister. Being one of the 11 or more nations worldwide with a sizable Hindu population, Hindus from Trinidad & Tobago make up a substantial proportion of the more than 200,000 American Hindus who share Trinidad & Tobago ethnic heritage and are particularly concentrated in the state of New York.

The ambassador and his aides were pleased to learn that AHC was founded to serve as the political advocacy voice in Washington for the three-million strong American Hindus who come from more than 11 different countries and also more than 500,000 Hindu converts who are Americans for many generations.

The growing significance of Hindus in American life and politics is due to their concentrations in swing states such as Florida, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Hindus now have the ability to affect presidential elections.

Hindu donor and voter support have become an imperative to candidates seeking the oval office. For example, in Northern Virginia alone there are 150,000 Hindu voters who cast their ballot regularly. In non-swing states such as New Jersey, New York and California, Hindus still play a large role in gubernatorial, congressional and local elections.

Besides their voting power, Hindus have emerged to become the wealthiest and most educated religious group in America. Hindu donor support can be crucial to the success of a political campaign at all levels. Hindu talent also support the campaign's senior policy aides, both in domestic and foreign policy issues.

President Donald Trump has officially recognized the decisive voter support he received from many Hindus during his campaign and has expressed his respect for Hindu principles of enlightenment.

Phillips-Spencer expressed his appreciation for the AHC delegation's visit to the Trinidad & Tobago Embassy in Washington, DC. He emphasized the important role that the Hindu faith plays in the national life of his country as well as in the United States.

Trinidad & Tobago is currently the leading exporter of liquid natural gas to the United States and also has a robust petrochemical and steel industries, tourism, and manufacturing.

The meeting was concluded with a viable action plan for the Trinidad & Tobago Embassy's involvement in the AHC Ambassador Circle agenda and events.