

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Date: October 13, 2019

Contact: Kumari Sherreitt kumarisherreitt@gmail.com

Issued by ISKCON Communications, Anuttama Dasa, Minister

Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii is currently running for the Democratic nomination for the office of the President of the United States. Congresswoman Gabbard self-identifies as Hindu, specifically as a member of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. She is the first Hindu American to run for President in the history of the United States.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), also known as the Hare Krishna society, is a global non-profit religious organization that also belongs to the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. ISKCON was founded in 1966 in New York City by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who brought the Vaishnava tradition from India to the West.

Congresswoman Gabbard is not a member of ISKCON. However, we appreciate that, inspired by her Vaishnava Hindu perspectives and desire to serve her country, she is running for President. We hope that many young Hindus and members of other minorities will follow her example.

As a religious non-profit organization in the United States, ISKCON does not, nor will we ever, endorse any particular political candidate or party. We encourage our members, and all citizens, to express their right to vote as directed by their individual conscience, and after a careful study of the issues and the candidates.

We note that while running for office Congresswoman Gabbard has brought to the forefront some of the universal messages of the Bhagavad-Gita such as inclusiveness, selfless service to others, accountability of leadership, mutual respect, caring for our planet, and devotion to the Divine, or God, according to one's individual faith. We welcome these values being highlighted as important issues for all Americans to consider.

We believe that Congresswoman Gabbard's candidacy is proof of the important contributions that minority religious communities make in our country, and of the strength of American diversity. In these times of political divide and social polarization we pray that more candidates for office will promote the non-sectarian, higher values of life as expressed by the world's great spiritual and religious teachings. This, ISKCON believes, is the best path for social and individual progress.

BACKGROUND: The Vaishnava tradition is a prominent devotional community within the diverse family of Hindu faith. Gaudiya Vaishnavas look to the Bhagavad-gita as their core spiritual text, and follow the path of devotion to God, or Bhakti-yoga, as expounded by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, a 16th Century saint and mystic.