

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2006

Dear Colleague,

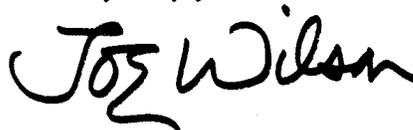
As Congress begins to consider legislation implementing the U.S.-India civilian nuclear agreement, we should recognize both the historic nature of this deal and the emerging strategic importance of India in global affairs.

The U.S. and India were estranged for too long during the Cold War. With the opening of India's economy to the West and a vibrant Indian American community reshaping America's image in India, our relationship has dramatically changed. India's middle class exceeds 300 million people, larger than America's population. In 2005, U.S. exports to India increased by thirty percent. More U.S. companies have invested in India than ever before. Our militaries regularly train together in joint exercises. Indian students fill our colleges and universities. Americans have embraced Indian food, yoga, and South Asian culture. Indians watch American television, listen to our music, and watch our movies. Polls consistently show Indians with very high favorable views of America and vice versa. Our two countries have grown closer based on shared values of democracy, freedom, religious pluralism, and belief in free markets.

India has an excellent record on nonproliferation and its nuclear weapons program is solely designed as a deterrent, based on India's own legitimate security assessments. India has pledged never to use nuclear weapons first. With China, Pakistan, and North Korea all maintaining nuclear weapons programs, it is unfair to criticize democratic India for taking steps to ensure the safety of its citizens. Although many nonproliferation experts have raised objections to this agreement, every single contention they make can be refuted. Further, they blur the distinction between the *proliferation* of nuclear weapons and the *possession* of them. To them, India's possession of nuclear weapons makes it just as guilty as Iran, which is trying to acquire such weapons to threaten its neighbors and destabilize the Middle East. In a perfect world, there would be no such weapons. But in a post 9-11 world, democratic countries like the U.S. and India must make irreversible decisions to protect against asymmetric threats to national security.

This deal takes a realistic assessment of India's nuclear weapons program and enhances international nonproliferation efforts by working with the IAEA and a country we can trust. India has had four nuclear reactors under IAEA safeguards for decades. Fourteen of their twenty-two reactors will be under permanent safeguards under this deal. This agreement will create American jobs, burn less fossil fuels, grow our economies, enhance mutual trust, and greatly develop our strategic relationship with India. I urge your support of this historic agreement.

Very truly yours,



JOE WILSON  
Member of Congress