



Senate Resolution 69 Sponsor Testimony

State Senator Michele Reynolds

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs & Public Safety committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Resolution 69.

SR 69 is a resolution that calls upon the United States Congress to recognize and address a long-standing human rights crisis: the forced displacement and oppression of over 120,000 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese citizens and other minorities by the government of Bhutan during the late 1980s and 1990s. These individuals—our Bhutanese-Nepali brothers and sisters—suffered simply because of their language, faith, and cultural identity. They were stripped of their citizenship, subjected to violence, and forced to flee their homeland. Many spent decades in refugee camps, living without the rights and protections most of us take for granted.

This resolution comes directly from the voices of my constituents. Ohio is home to more than 55,000 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese Americans, many of whom are American citizens and lawful permanent residents who live and work in my district and across central Ohio. They are hard-working families, small business owners, students, and essential workers who have contributed so much to our state. But they carry with them the pain of a community that was forcibly displaced, stripped of citizenship, and denied basic human rights by the government of Bhutan decades ago. Thousands still remain in limbo in refugee camps today, and many continue to face discrimination in Bhutan.

This is why I am urging Congress to step up and address this injustice. We have a responsibility to stand with our Ohio neighbors and call on the government of Bhutan to release political prisoners, restore citizenship, and allow those who wish to return to do so safely and with dignity. While Bhutan has made progress in other areas, including democratic reforms and environmental leadership, this dark chapter remains unresolved.

If we pass SR 69, Ohio will become the first state in the nation to formally call on Congress to address this human rights crisis. At a time when so many families in our state are watching and waiting for justice, Ohio can lead the way. We can set the example for other states to follow by standing with our Bhutanese-American neighbors and urging our federal leaders to act."

Chairman, members of the committee, I respectfully ask for your support of SR 69. Let's make sure Ohio speaks with a clear voice in defense of liberty, justice, and the rights of those who have suffered too long.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.