

Testimony of Dipisha KC in support of SR-69
Ohio House of Representatives – June 4, 2025

Good afternoon, Honorable Chair Senator Johnson, Senator Reynolds, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your time, your ears, and above all—your willingness to hear us.

My name is Dipisha KC. I stand before you as a proud Bhutanese-Nepali American, a daughter of refugees, and a living testament to the stories you've heard today. I was born in a refugee camp. I grew up watching my mother, a single parent, carry the weight of our entire world on her back. We had no land, no citizenship, but what we did have was her fierce belief in education. She always said, "Knowledge is the one thing no one can take from you." I didn't understand it then. But now I do.

I stand here not just because of her sacrifice, but because I carry the voice of a community whose trauma has become my own.

You have just heard stories of unfathomable suffering from prison cells soaked in blood to refugee camps steeped in hunger, from mothers who have not seen their children in decades to children who learned fear before they learned to read. These are not isolated tragedies. They are the collective trauma of a people stripped of home, of dignity, and of recognition.

You heard from Mani Kumar Biswa, who fled Bhutan as a teenager and still carries the memory of his mother's tears and the fading outline of his homeland. From Bhakta Giri, whose very attempt to speak for human rights was met with iron chains, forced labor, and the murder of his fellow inmates. From Kamal Adhikari, whose father was tortured for his faith and language and who, even in his final years battling cancer, longs for justice—not vengeance, just truth. Our stories ache with sorrow, endurance, and unimaginable pain. A mother whose son remains imprisoned without trial. A father who was tortured for speaking his language. A child stripped of dignity for wearing the "wrong clothes". These are not isolated events—they are connected threads of a tapestry woven in exile and injustice.

And I carry those threads with me. Because the trauma of my community has become my own. So much so that it has led me to pursue my degree in global studies with a focus on human rights, and if my studies have taught me anything, it is that injustice to anyone is injustice to me. One refugee in captivity threatens my freedom. The bars that still cage our brothers and fathers in Bhutan do not just confine them—they confine our healing, our ability to breathe fully, to

grieve, to move forward. We are here today not just to tell you what happened, but to ask you to help us change what continues.

These are not stories of the distant past. This is our living memory. And these wounds persist. Today, over 6,000 Bhutanese refugees remain stateless in camps, forgotten by the world. Dozens of political prisoners remain behind bars in Bhutan, serving life sentences without trial. And thousands of Bhutanese-Americans now your constituents, your neighbors, your co-workers cannot even return to the land of their birth to visit graves, to say goodbye, to heal.

Despite everything, we have not let bitterness define us. We have built new lives here in Ohio. We work in hospitals, schools, tech labs, and social service organizations. We raise our children here with the same hope our parents once carried into exile.

But healing requires recognition. Justice demands acknowledgment.

SR-69 is not just a symbolic resolution, it is a mirror held up to history. It says: we see you, we believe you, and your suffering matters.

Ohio has the chance to lead. To be the first state that names the truth and demands justice: ethnic cleansing happened. It was wrong. And we will not be silent about it.

So I ask you not just as a member of this community, but as someone who believes in the promise of America to pass SR-69. Let this resolution be a spark of accountability. Let it be the start of dialogue between governments. Let it be a step toward reunion for families, release for prisoners, and peace for those who have carried grief for far too long.

You have heard our truth. Now help us turn that truth into justice.
Thank you.