

## Building National Civil Rights Infrastructure for South Asian Communities

The **South Asian American Justice Collaborative (SAAJCO)** is a national nonprofit fighting for the civil and human rights of the South Asian diaspora in the United States through impact litigation, legal advocacy, and community engagement.

## Why this Work is Needed

### 6+ Million

South Asians live in the United States, with rapid growth over the last decade.

### 630,000

Undocumented South Asians are estimated to live in the U.S.

### 97,000

Border encounters involving Indians occurred in 2023, a fivefold increase over prior years.

### 115%

Increase in anti-South Asian hate rhetoric and violence between 2023 and 2025.

### \$100K

Presidential proclamation attacking H-1B visas, a primary employment based immigration pathway for South Asian communities.

### 125+ Years

Promise of birthright citizenship for immigrant children now at risk.

## Our Approach

### Collaborative Mobilization

As attacks on immigrant communities and constitutional protections intensify, SAAJCO works collaboratively with partners across the civil rights ecosystem to help strengthen legal and community infrastructure serving South Asian communities nationwide.

### Key Strategies

- Community engagement and Know Your Rights initiatives
- Legal resource development and referrals
- Coalition building and civic participation efforts
- Impact litigation and amicus advocacy



## Litigation & Advocacy

In just two years, SAAJCO has engaged in major litigation and advocacy efforts affecting immigrant and civil rights nationwide.

### H-1B Visa Fee Litigation

- Challenge \$100K presidential proclamation on H-1B visas. Co-counsel with Democracy Forward and Justice Action Center

### Birthright Citizenship (Amicus Brief)

- Filed an amicus brief before the Supreme Court with 35+ organizational signatories defending birthright citizenship.
- Collaborated with partners including Asian Law Caucus to strengthen South Asian historical and community context.

### Immigration & Asylum Freeze Litigation

- Lawsuit challenging federal policies halting immigration benefits for nationals of multiple countries, including Afghanistan.
- Co-counsel with Democracy Forward, Muslim Advocates, and RAICES.

### Texas Redistricting (Amicus Brief)

Joined amicus briefing filed by Texas Civil Rights Project and AALDEF addressing vote dilution affecting communities of color, including South Asians.

## Building Legal Infrastructure

SAAJCO is working with partners to expand long term legal infrastructure serving South Asian communities nationwide.

Current efforts include:

- Building a national pro bono network
- Expanding litigation partnerships and advocacy capacity
- Developing rapid response and habeas support initiatives
- Strengthening access to legal resources and referrals



# Community Infrastructure & Engagement



## SAAJCO's Engaged Communities Series

Developed in partnership with SAAPRI, convened monthly sessions on topics such as Know Your Rights, Unpacking Hate, and Civic Participation, connecting community members with trusted partners and accessible legal information.

<https://saaajco.org/programs/community-engagement/ecs/>



## What We're Building

Expanding access to legal information through publicly available **resource guides** and the continued development of our Resource Line.

Launching *Belonging is Our Resistance*, an initiative focused on narrative change, community engagement, and democracy protection.

## Resource Line

SAAJCO operates a Resource Line connecting community members with legal information, referrals, and culturally responsive support, informed in part by community based models such as APALRC.

A promotional graphic for an event titled "ENGAGED COMMUNITIES SERIES 2: FROM HATE TO HOPE: SOUTH ASIAN RESILIENCE, RESISTANCE, & THRIVING THROUGH HISTORY". The graphic features a yellow and orange color scheme with a starburst design. Below the title, it lists the moderator and five panelists with their respective photos. The text describes the session's focus on the history of hate and discrimination against South Asians in the U.S. and how these narratives influence present-day experiences.

**ENGAGED COMMUNITIES SERIES 2**

**FROM HATE TO HOPE:**  
SOUTH ASIAN RESILIENCE, RESISTANCE, & THRIVING THROUGH HISTORY

UNPACKING HATE  
SAAPRI & SAAJCO

This session explores the history of hate and discrimination faced by South Asians in the United States. Our speakers will examine the roots and evolution of anti-South Asian sentiment, uncovering how these historical narratives continue to influence present-day experiences and inspire collective thriving.

MODERATOR | PANELIST | PANELIST | PANELIST | PANELIST

## Know Your Rights & Legal Education

Through partnerships with local organizations, SAAJCO delivered Know Your Rights programming on the ground and online, and developed practical role-play guides to equip community members for real-life scenarios.

