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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman**
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing:
“American Compassion in India: Government Obstacles”
December 6, 2016

To put this hearing in perspective, I want to make a point about India. As Chairman, and as a leader of the India Caucus, I helped build that caucus from 12 members to 160 members, and I managed the U.S.-Indian Civil Nuclear Agreement on the House floor, and beat back the anti-India amendments, which would have killed the agreement. I carried the original bill to lift sanctions on India in the 1990s, and traveled with President Clinton on his historic trip to India. I was tasked with briefing President Bush on the importance of deepening our relationship with India on counterterrorism and on trade.

I flew into Bhuj with USAID the day after the Gujarat earthquakes and first met then-Chief Minister Narendra Modi, who was on the ground bringing order out of chaos. I admired him for the work he’s done and I admire him today for what he’s trying to do in India. I traveled to Mumbai the day after the terrorist attacks to meet with Indian intelligence officials and pressed the government of Pakistan to either try the LET terrorists or turn them over to The Hague to be tried for crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court.

I was one of the leading voices pushing for a U.S. visa for Chief Minister Modi. I extended invitations for Prime Minister Modi to address a Joint Meeting of Congress, a historic occasion we celebrated this June. And I also personally hosted the Prime Minister at a reception in his honor.

My chief of staff Amy and her daughter, who is Indian American, have for years sponsored and built a relationship with a girl in India. These two seven-year-olds draw and send pictures to each other; they share what games they like to play and what food they like to eat. That bonding experience is the same for the other American families that also send, each of them, \$38 every month to 145,000 children, the poorest of the poor in India. These are children who would otherwise be without enough food, without the fees that they need for their education. Americans have been sending these checks through an organization

called Compassion to India for nearly 50 years. In India, it is the single largest contributor of aid for children living in extreme poverty. Now, Amy and thousands of other American families are being obstructed from supporting these children. And this is despite the best effort of Secretary of State John Kerry and of myself and others on the Committee. We have spent nine months and hundreds of hours dealing with the Indian bureaucracy on this, and it looks like the bureaucracy is trying to run out the clock.

We as Americans deal with American bureaucracy; it's part of the job here as Members the House of Representatives. We work for our constituents, but we don't always win. Bureaucracies are stubborn, stubborn things in America, let me tell you. Presidents can have a vision, but that vision can be frustrated by the bureaucracy.

Prime Minister Modi has a vision about India. He is self-made. He was never a member of some elite. He was the son of a poor man – as he says, the “son of a poor man standing in front of you today.” And as he said: “I am devoted to the development of all the Dalit, the oppressed, the underprivileged, the deprived. A government is one that thinks and hears the voice of the people. A government must be for the poor.”

But bureaucracies have their own dynamics and they can stifle any president's or prime minister's dreams.

For the past nine months, this Committee has had meetings, written letters, made phone calls, and for that, I thank our Members. This isn't a hearing that the Committee expected to be holding. It is my hope that by bringing attention to this issue, as we're doing here today, the 145,000 children will not be tragically denied the services they desperately need, and that American families, like Amy's, can continue to send the \$38 a month for food and education fees to the poorest of the poor.