

We are transforming the lives of the poor's through education....

Gandhi statue Issue: Update on AANA members protest visit to Flint, Michigan

Wednesday, 9/16/10 - 8:00 AM

This morning AANA members Vivek Chavan, Shashank Vaidya, Ganga Sivapandian and Mahesh Wasnik set off to the City of Flint to meet City **Mayor Dayne Walling** to voice our serious concern over the upcoming Gandhi statue in the University of Michigan, Flint campus. AANA members could meet the Mayor at around 10.30AM and handed over the memorandum opposing the inappropriate Gandhi statue and presented the Mayor with two of the books written by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, “**Annihilation of caste**”, and “**What Congress and Gandhi have done for untouchables**”. Members informed the Mayor that the true story Gandhi can be in the presented books and also can be found on the internet. We requested **Mayor Dayne Walling** to stop the proposed inauguration of Gandhi statue forthwith, as it is major mistake and a historic blunder which will tarnish the image of the City and more so the University for the times to come. The Mayor was kind enough to listen to our concerns for more than 30minutes and informed us that he fully understands our concerns and facts about Gandhi. While listening carefully, Mayor Walling also took notes of our concerns in his notepad. Mayor’s secretary also took notes of our discussions and comments. The Mayor informed us that the location of the statue is a private property of the University of Michigan therefore the final decision lies with the University officials. However he informed us that he will be writing to the University Chancellor immediately through an email and will update us.

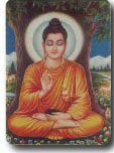


Note: Please do not use these pictures for political purpose (request from Mayor, City of Flint)

Wednesday, 9/16/10- 11.15AM

AANA member’s Vivek Chavan, Ganga Sivapandian and Mahesh Wasnik could meet **Jennifer Hogan** (Executive Director of University relations) to voice our concern in person as our initial voice mail messages for an appointment got unanswered. Finally we decided to just drop into her office and could meet her.

We submitted the memorandum to **Jennifer Hogan** and provided all the facts about what’s happening in India and other facts about Gandhi contrary to what the vested interests are informing them. She



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understood our points and concerns but she said that will be moving forward with Gandhi statue unveiling ceremony regardless. She mentioned the peace committee has been planning the event on **Oct 2nd** for a couple of years she thinks there is no way they could stop this event. Jennifer also mentioned that on Oct 4th (date is yet to be confirmed) that there will be a debate on the Gandhi on the Flint campus and scholars will be available to discuss the issue. She invited us to participate. She will provide the date and timing for this event.



Wednesday, 9/16/10 around 11.50AM

AANA member's Vivek Chavan and Mahesh Wasnik went to meet Congressman Dale E Kildee, 5th District, Flint, Michigan. Congressman Dale E Kildee was not available when we bumped in to his office. We again voiced our concerns to his secretary and handed over the memorandum and requested her inform the Congressman to take up the matter and pass our message to the leaders at Washington DC.

Congressman's Secretary confirmed that they will send our memorandum to the Congressman and convey our serious concern on the upcoming Gandhi statue in Flint.

Conclusion:

AANA member's personal visit with Mayor, Jennifer Hogan and Congressman is very fruitful. We conveyed our message to them and provided real facts about Gandhi. Now it's their duty how to react on this issue. Jennifer Hogan said that peace committee is moving forward for the ceremony. In future university is going to arrange debate on this issue and she invited us to join the debate on Gandhi. (Tentatively schedule d for Oct 4th-2010)

Next Steps:

We told Jennifer Hogan that if the University will not stop the ceremony then we will come on that day to do a peaceful protest. We will distribute fliers, books and convey our message to the Americans and students.

Thank you very much.

Regards

Ambedkar Association of North America (AANA)

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