

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

ALVIN E. THOMPSON
REPRESENTATIVE
28TH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
CAMBRIDGE

LEGISLATIVE AIDE
THOMAS W. MAZZA

Committee on House Rules
Vice Chair
Federal Financial Assistance

ROOM 167, STATE HOUSE
TEL. (617) 722-2692

February 11, 1998

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Hall
795 Mass Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

I was pleased to hear of your unanimous resolution of support for Ms. Bela Bhasin, a teacher at the Cambridgeport School who is requesting permanent residency in the United States as an "Alien with extraordinary ability in education".

Enclosed are letters of support I sent to Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator John Kerry and Congressman Joseph Kennedy to reinforce the City Council's resolution.

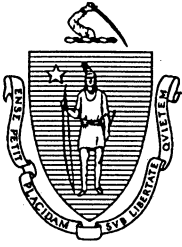
With warmest regards,

ALVIN E. THOMPSON
State Representative
28th Middlesex District

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February 11, 1998

Senator Edward M. Kennedy
2400 Kennedy Federal Office Building
Boston, MA 02203

Dear Senator Kennedy:

I am writing to alert you of a crucial matter concerning the Cambridge Public Schools.

Bela Bhasin, a citizen of India and a first/second grade teacher at the Cambridgeport School since 1993, is currently a guest in our country under a Visa issued in cooperation with the Cambridge Public School Department. This Visa was issued in 1995 and will expire on July 31, 1998, to the dismay of everyone who has had the pleasure of knowing Ms. Bhasin. She filed a petition for permanent residency with the Immigration and Naturalization Service under the National Interest waiver category in March of 1997. Her petition was denied by INS on the basis that the impact she would have on education in the United States would not be substantial enough to be of national interest. Countless colleagues, parents and students vehemently disagree with this statement, and are waging a fierce campaign to keep Ms. Bhasin in her adopted country. An appeal, which is still pending in Washington, was filed in June of 1997, and a new petition was filed in January of 1998 under the category "Alien with extraordinary ability in education". It is my belief that Ms. Bhasin has shown the talent to be considered under this category.

Ms. Bhasin earned a Masters Degree in Education from Wheelock College, and received professional status as a teacher in September of 1997. She has been an advisor on development of early childhood teaching standards for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and has worked with Outward Bound and Project Zen of Harvard University. In addition to these accomplishments, Ms. Bhasin is frequently asked to train future teachers from local universities, ensuring that her teaching skills and methods will benefit countless classrooms for many years to come.

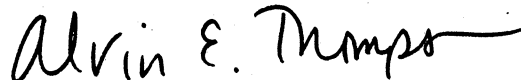
The type of exemption she now requests is usually granted solely to teachers at the university level. However, I cannot think of a more critical place where extraordinary talent and

creativity is needed than at the early stages of learning. Ms. Bhasin has an innate ability to reach children and excite them about their education. She is extremely knowledgeable of children's cognitive development and uses this knowledge to construct her lessons and assignments. Her ability to successfully teach math, a particularly difficult subject for teachers at the elementary level, is coupled with her focus on promoting respect and diversity in the classroom. Parents have called her the type of teacher a child is lucky to have once in a lifetime, and fellow educators have said she is one of the most exceptional teachers they have ever worked with. President Clinton himself said in this year's State of the Union address that for the United States "to have the best schools, we must have the best teachers." We can not afford to deny our children the benefits of such a teacher simply because she was born outside United States soil.

We constantly hear about the problems with public education in the United States. It is refreshing to hear of a teacher with the extreme talent and dedication that Ms. Bhasin has exhibited. It is even more refreshing to hear of parents, colleagues and students rallying around a beloved teacher and doing anything possible to ensure that she stays where she belongs. I can not stress enough the concern that parents and both local and national colleagues have expressed over the possibility of losing Ms. Bhasin, and I urge you to do anything and everything possible to see that her request for permanent residency is granted.

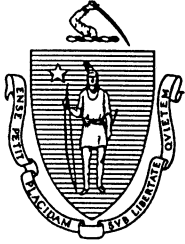
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With warmest regards,



ALVIN E. THOMPSON
State Representative
28th Middlesex District

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Vice Chair
Federal Financial Assistance

ROOM 167, STATE HOUSE
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February 11, 1998

Senator John F. Kerry
One Bowdoin Sq., 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Senator Kerry:

I am writing to alert you of a crucial matter concerning the Cambridge Public Schools.

Bela Bhasin, a citizen of India and a first/second grade teacher at the Cambridgeport School since 1993, is currently a guest in our country under a Visa issued in cooperation with the Cambridge Public School Department. This Visa was issued in 1995 and will expire on July 31, 1998, to the dismay of everyone who has had the pleasure of knowing Ms. Bhasin. She filed a petition for permanent residency with the Immigration and Naturalization Service under the National Interest waiver category in March of 1997. Her petition was denied by INS on the basis that the impact she would have on education in the United States would not be substantial enough to be of national interest. Countless colleagues, parents and students vehemently disagree with this statement, and are waging a fierce campaign to keep Ms. Bhasin in her adopted country. An appeal, which is still pending in Washington, was filed in June of 1997, and a new petition was filed in January of 1998 under the category "Alien with extraordinary ability in education". It is my belief that Ms. Bhasin has shown the talent to be considered under this category.

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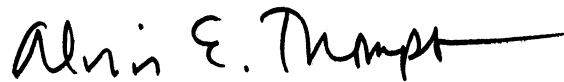
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I appreciate your attention to this very important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if I can be of any further assistance.

With warmest regards,



ALVIN E. THOMPSON
State Representative
28th Middlesex District

AET/mm

13-5



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Vice Chair
Federal Financial Assistance

ROOM 167, STATE HOUSE
TEL. (617) 722-2692

February 11, 1998

Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy
529 Main St.
Charlestown, MA 02129

Dear Congressman Kennedy:

I am writing to alert you of a crucial matter concerning the Cambridge Public Schools.

Bela Bhasin, a citizen of India and a first/second grade teacher at the Cambridgeport School since 1993, is currently a guest in our country under a Visa issued in cooperation with the Cambridge Public School Department. This Visa was issued in 1995 and will expire on July 31, 1998, to the dismay of everyone who has had the pleasure of knowing Ms. Bhasin. She filed a petition for permanent residency with the Immigration and Naturalization Service under the National Interest waiver category in March of 1997. Her petition was denied by INS on the basis that the impact she would have on education in the United States would not be substantial enough to be of national interest. Countless colleagues, parents and students vehemently disagree with this statement, and are waging a fierce campaign to keep Ms. Bhasin in her adopted country. An appeal, which is still pending in Washington, was filed in June of 1997, and a new petition was filed in January of 1998 under the category "Alien with extraordinary ability in education". It is my belief that Ms. Bhasin has shown the talent to be considered under this category.

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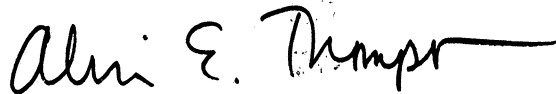
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I appreciate your attention to this very important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if I can be of any further assistance.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alvin E. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

ALVIN E. THOMPSON
State Representative
28th Middlesex District

AET/mm

13-7

Consent Communication #13

1085

Communication was received from Representative Alvin Thompson, regarding Bela Rhasin, a teacher at the Cambridgeport School.

In City Council February 23, 1998

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