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Republican Hindu Coalition looks to turn Indian-Americans into powerful voting bloc

By [Anjali Shastry](#) - The Washington Times

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Prominent businessman Shalabh “Shalli” Kumar said he’s donating \$2 million to Republican candidates in the run-up to next year’s elections as he announced the formation Tuesday of the Republican Hindu Coalition, hoping to turn Indian-Americans into a powerful voting bloc.

Mr. Kumar said his own pledge will be part of some \$10 million the new group hopes to donate to [GOP](#) candidates over the next year as it pushes Republicans to compete for Indian-Americans, who traditionally lean toward the Democratic Party.

Mr. Kumar stood alongside coalition honorary chairman Newt Gingrich, a former House speaker and 2012 [GOP](#) presidential candidate and several current members of Congress, who said national security concerns could be the key to winning Indian-Americans’ votes.

There is a direct tie between what happened in Paris and what happened several years ago in Mumbai,” Mr. Gingrich said. “There is a common threat and it’s only appropriate that the world’s largest democracy in numbers and the world’s most powerful democracy in military power should be natural allies fighting on behalf of civilization. So I see this organization as potentially playing a very important role in being a bridge between America and India and across all the world, the Hindu community.”

The coalition hopes to recruit some 400 members to raise money and try to woo Indian-American voters. Eventually they hope to recruit Hindu-Americans to run for office as Republicans.