



Gingrich leads new GOP expansion effort focused on Indian-Americans



By [Paul Bedard \(@SecretsBedard\)](#) • 9/28/15 8:49 AM

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, targeting a traditional Democratic political base, is getting behind a new effort to bring Indian-Americans into the Republican Party. He will be the honorary chairman of the "Republican Hindu Coalition," fashioned after the influential Republican Jewish Coalition, and funded with an initial \$2 million from Chicago businessman Shalabh "Shalli" Kumar, of AVG Advanced Technologies, an electronics firm.

Gingrich told the Washington Examiner that like the Jewish group, Kumar's could give the Republican Party a new inroad to first-generation immigrants that traditionally vote Democratic.



Shalabh "Shalli" Kumar, of AVG Advanced Technologies, is behind the Republican Hindu Coalition.

"What Shalli is doing is really making us move towards bringing together people from all over the country, giving them a chance to get involved in politics, and in the process really beginning to give us an opportunity to have a much different Republican Party that's much broader based," Gingrich said.

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Kumar said he was prompted to form the political group by concerns that President Obama and Democratic leaders are undermining the economic recovery with regulations, and dropping the ball overseas.

"This is the worst presidency, worst for America, the U.S. has ever seen," Kumar told the Examiner.

And he doesn't have any hope for a Hillary Clinton presidency either. "She will be 'Obama-plus,'" he said, adding that the " Clintons in general are driven by personal success rather than success of the country."

Kumar has long been involved in GOP politics, though he once supported Democrats such as former President Jimmy Carter. Like so many others, he switched after hearing 1980 Carter challenger Ronald Reagan passionately promote free enterprise.

He later befriended Gingrich and the two have a plan to attract 400 founding members to the Republican Hindu Coalition to raise money for GOP candidates and groups, while also convincing Indian-Americans to switch to the Republican Party.

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The RHC, which will officially start this fall, will back candidates that will focus on cutting U.S. debt, supporting a strong national security policy against terrorist groups such as the Islamic State, reducing aid to India's foes like Pakistan, and expanding trade with India. For example, Kumar said he wants to convince U.S. companies to shift manufacturing operations from China to India.

Gingrich said Kumar's group should help activate Indian-Americans not involved in politics. "A lot of first generation folks feel more comfortable and feel more engaged and more involved if they network with fellow people from their background," he said.

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