

August 12, 2011

Mid South Sikh Sabha
8221 Macon Road
Cordova, TN 38018

Re: School Bullying Survey

ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਜੀ।

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ
ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਿਹ॥

ਸਿੱਖ ਕੋਲੀਸ਼ਨ ਯੂਨਾਈਟਡ ਸਟੇਟਸ (ਅਮਰੀਕਾ) ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ (ਸਿਵਲ ਰਾਈਟਸ) ਦਾ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਨਾਲ ਪੂਰੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ, ਇਹ ਜਾਨਣ ਲਈ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੀ “ਬੁਲਿੰਗ” ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ। ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਕੋਲੀਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਦੇ ਹੇਠਲੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਹਨ:

Highlights

- Total Number of Youth Anonymously Surveyed: **14**
- Average Age of Youth Anonymously Surveyed: **15.6**
- Percentage Teased at School Because of Sikh/Punjabi Identity: **29%**

The following anonymous survey responses illustrate the nature of bullying and harassment experienced by Sikh youth at schools in your area. Although our sample size was small, these responses are consistent with our findings around the United States:

- *“They though[t] I was a girl [be]cause of my hair”* – Male, aged 13
- *“[I was teased because of my] Patka.”* – Male, aged 14
- *“[I was teased because of my] Turban.”* – Male, aged 17
- *“[I was teased because of my] Asian identity. People have called me a terrorist.”* – Male, aged 15

Recommendations

1. Build Relationships with School Officials

The Sikh Coalition recommends that the Sikh community of Tennessee bring issues of teasing, bullying, and harassment of Sikh youth to the attention of local and state school officials. For example, based on our survey results, the following state official can be contacted directly:

Mr. Mike Herrmann
Office of Safe & Supportive Schools
Tennessee Department of Education
(615) 741-8466 | Mike.Herrmann@tn.gov

The Tennessee Department of Education maintains a school safety hotline where bullying incidents can be reported (1-800-824-3463) as well as a comprehensive anti-bullying website at http://www.tn.gov/education/safe_schls/safety_cntr/bullying.shtml.

2. Ask School Officials to Adopt Strong Anti-Bullying Policies

The Sikh Coalition recommends that the Sikh community of Tennessee work with state and local school officials to promote stronger anti-bullying policies. A strong policy includes clear prohibitions on bullying and harassment, as well as data collection requirements; a process for students to report bullying incidents; and diversity appreciation programs for students and staff. The Sikh Coalition can provide copies of model anti-bullying policies upon request.

3. Ask Government Officials to Support Strong Anti-Bullying Laws

The Sikh Coalition recommends that the Sikh community of Tennessee work with government officials to promote anti-bullying laws. For example, the Sikh Coalition is a strong supporter of the Safe Schools Improvement Act—proposed federal legislation that would require schools and school districts to collect and publicize data about bullying incidents. The following government officials can be contacted and encouraged to support this important legislation:

U.S. Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn
<http://blackburn.house.gov>
Phone: (901) 382-5811

U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander
<http://alexander.senate.gov>
Phone: (901) 544-4224

U.S. Senator Bob Corker
<http://corker.senate.gov>
Phone: (901) 683-1910

For more information about this survey, or to support our efforts to combat school bullying, please contact Sikh Coalition Volunteer Advocate Arvinder Singh Kang (arvinder.sikhcoalition@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

THE SIKH COALITION