

August 12, 2011

Guru Nanak Sikh Center
1400 West Jackson Street
Tupelo, MS 38801

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 ਜਾਣਨ 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: **9**
- Average Age of Youth Anonymously Surveyed: **19.7**
- Percentage Teased at School Because of Sikh/Punjabi Identity: **67%**

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:

- *“People make fun of my name. They also make fun of my middle name Kaur. When I try to explain my religion, they make fun of it.”* – Female, aged 17
- *“People make fun of my religion and thought I worshipped cows and was a terrorist. They also make fun of my middle name [K]aur.”* – Female, aged 16
- *“They make fun ... that we are immigrant[s].”* – Female, aged 14

Three respondents, all of whom are now in their 20s, reported that they were teased at school because of their patkas or turbans, and one indicated that his turban had been touched in class.

Recommendations

1. Build Relationships with School Officials

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

Mr. David Meadows
Superintendent, Tupelo Public School District
PO Box 557, Tupelo, MS 38802
(662) 841-8850 | <http://tupeloschools.com>

In addition, the Mississippi Department of Education maintains a school safety hotline where bullying incidents can be reported (1-866-960-6472) as well as a comprehensive anti-bullying website at <http://www.fearstopshere.com>.

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

The Sikh Coalition recommends that the Sikh community of Mississippi 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 Mississippi 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. Congressman Alan Nunnelee
<http://nunnelee.house.gov>
Phone: (662) 841-8808

U.S. Senator Roger Wicker
<http://wicker.senate.gov>
Phone: (662) 844-5010

U.S. Senator Thad Cochran
<http://cochran.senate.gov>
Phone: (662) 236-1018

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