

Testimony of Amandeep Singh

before the

Committee on Labor and Employment

California State Assembly

AB1964 – The Workplace Religious Freedom Act of 2012

April 18, 2012

My name is Amandeep Singh. I am 22 years old and a resident of Yuba City, California. I am speaking in support of AB1964 and am thankful to the Committee for giving me this opportunity.

I grew up in California, and my professional dream is to serve as a law enforcement officer. Being a police officer is an honorable career and a great way to serve and protect the public. And yet I have been told twice that my Sikh articles of faith will prevent me from achieving my dream. During the Summer of 2010, I wanted to join the California Highway Patrol. I asked one of my mentors—who has advanced knowledge about how government works—to help me find out whether the agency would have a problem hiring Sikhs. The agency told him that Sikhs cannot serve. On March 28, 2012, I contacted a recruiter for the L.A. County Sheriff. I asked him whether Sikhs are allowed to serve. The recruiter said that I would only be allowed to keep a beard—as required by my religion—if I become a detective, later in my career. This makes no sense. How can I become a detective and practice my religion later in my career if I am prevented from serving in the first place?

Sikhs serve in the police departments of the United Kingdom and Canada. Sikhs also serve in the United States Army. One of these Sikh American soldiers won the Bronze Star Medal. You can find their pictures attached to my written testimony.

I support AB1964 because it will encourage law enforcement agencies and other employers in California to modernize their image policies. Sikhs and other religious minorities deserve an equal chance to follow their dreams, no matter what career they pursue. Thank you for considering my testimony.



Major Kamaljeet Singh Kalsi, United States Army, Recipient of the Bronze Star Medal
Source: <http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/strength/fullsize/fullsize.cfm?id=207>



Capt. Tejdeep Singh Rattan, United States Army, Recipient of NATO Meritorious Service Medal
Source: <http://www.army.mil/article/36339/sikh-soldiers-allowed-to-serve-retain-their-articles-of-faith>



Sgt. Baltej Singh Dhillon, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Source: <http://news.rediff.com/report/2010/may/12/baltej-dhillon-rcmp-on-20-years-in-the-force.htm>



Superintendent Raj Singh Kohli, London Metropolitan Police, announcing the death of Amy Winehouse

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-14263743>



Spc. Simranpreet Singh Lamba, United States Army, after graduating Army Basic Training
Source: <http://www.army.mil/article/47924/>