

December 02, 2009

One disturbing, continuing aftermath of 9/11 is discrimination against American Sikhs, who devoutly practice a religion most Americans know little about. We cannot allow this blatant discrimination to continue.

To expose and challenge this discrimination -- and try to educate others -- Public Justice has just sued the Air Serv Corporation, a large airport contracting company, for refusing to hire a Sikh American because he wears a turban and beard, as required by his religion. Our client, Inderjit Singh, is an American citizen with a college degree who applied for a job as an Air Serv shuttle-bus driver. Mr. Singh was well-qualified for the position, but Air Serv turned him down because of a company policy that prohibits facial hair and hats -- even after Mr. Singh explained that his turban and beard are important articles of his Sikh faith.



Inderjit Singh

"I just want to work and earn a living, but Air Serv refused to give me a chance," said Mr. Singh. "I don't want this to happen to anyone else, and I don't want my son to face discrimination in the future because of his own turban and beard."

Mr. Singh grew up in an observant Sikh home, and in accordance with Sikh teaching, he has worn a turban since his youth and has not cut his hair since birth. Mr. Singh has also worn a turban and beard at several other jobs without incident, and there is no reason to believe that his turban and beard would have interfered with Air Serv's bus driver job.

The EEOC has already investigated Mr. Singh's case and determined that there is reason to believe that Air Serv violated the law. Our complaint -- filed on December 1 with Public Justice Cooperating Counsel Kim Jeselskis of Macey, Swanson and Allman in Indianapolis -- charges that Air Serv violated federal employment law by denying Mr. Singh a job because of his religious practices. Title VII requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for applicants' sincerely held religious beliefs, but Air Serv refused to do that here, even after Mr. Singh explained that his turban and beard are required by his Sikh religion.

To read our complaint, [click here](#).

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion, originating in South Asia, which teaches honesty, compassion, humility, piety, social commitment, and tolerance for other religions. The personal appearance of a Sikh is one of the most important ways for adherents to declare their commitment and dedication to the faith. Unfortunately, Sikhs' turbans and uncut hair have also made them frequent targets of discrimination, even violence-especially since 9/11.

This is an important civil rights issue for hundreds of thousands of Americans. Approximately 500,000 Sikhs live in the U.S., and they face routine ignorance and intolerance. Inderjit Singh, like many Sikh Americans, simply wanted to work so that he could

support his family, including his elderly parents.

Public Justice's legal team on this case includes Jeselskis, Public Justice Staff Attorneys Victoria Ni and Claire Prestel, and Budd-Kazan Fellow Matt Wessler.

Thanks to you for helping make this important civil rights work possible. With your help, we will keep fighting for justice for all.

Arthur Bryant
Executive Director
Public Justice and the
Public Justice Foundation

P.S. Please forward this email to friends and colleagues who'd be interested. (When you do so, delete the information below about unsubscribing, or they could unsubscribe you.) To make a special contribution, renew your membership, or join us, please [click here](#).

email: abryant@publicjustice.net

voice: 202-797-8600

web: <http://www.publicjustice.net>