

## CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

November 2014 Elections

Please answer the following questions and return the questionnaire by April 30, 2014 via email to [questionnaire@americansikhcommittee.org](mailto:questionnaire@americansikhcommittee.org). Feel free to answer at length or succinctly. However, it should be noted that all questions call for a 'yes' or 'no' answer prior to any explanation.

**Congressman Bera has a campaign policy not to complete questionnaires, however, he did complete a telephone interview on 4/29/14 with a committee representative. The responses below were recorded during the interview and subsequently provided to the Bera Campaign for review.**

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American Sikhs report that they endure increased scrutiny due to discriminatory profiling at airports around the United States by law enforcement.

1. Do you support the proposed federal [End Racial Profiling Act](#)?

Yes.

2. Do you support adding a prohibition on profiling on the basis of religion to the [United States Justice Department Guidance on Racial Profiling](#)?

Yes.



School bullying acutely affects American Sikh school children. The [U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#) heard testimony that that a large majority of Sikh school children experience bullying and harassment in schools.

3. Do you support the proposed federal [Safe Schools Improvement Act](#)?

Yes.

In the United States, American Sikhs are barred from service in the US military unless they remove their religiously-mandated turban and cut religiously-mandated uncut hair. Over the past five years, the United States Army has made one-time, individual exemptions for three Sikh soldiers, allowing them to maintain their religiously-mandated turbans and uncut hair. Similarly, the Washington DC Police Department made a change in policy to allow any Sikh police officer to serve with his or her turban and uncut hair.



4. Do you support a change in United States military policy so that Sikhs would have an opportunity to serve our military while maintaining their turbans and uncut hair without requiring them to seek special, hard to obtain, revocable accommodations in order to do so?

**Yes.**

5. Will you encourage law enforcement agencies in your Congressional district to allow Sikhs to serve as police officers without removing their religiously-mandated turbans and uncut hair?

**Yes.**



This year marks the 30th anniversary of anti-Sikh pogroms in India. In the first week of November 1984, at least 3,000 Sikhs were killed in New Delhi alone.<sup>1 2 3</sup> Government officials, law enforcement officers, and military forces failed to prevent or participated in the slaughter.<sup>4</sup> In many documented incidents, public officials distributed voter lists and weapons used to locate and kill Sikh men, women, and children.<sup>5</sup> Most of the perpetrators of the pogroms have not been brought to justice<sup>6</sup> and many have flourished in government and political party positions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [2011 Annual Report of the US Commission on International Freedom, India Chapter Summary, page 245](#)

<sup>2</sup> [India: Bring Charges for Newly Discovered Massacre of Sikhs](#), Human Rights Watch, April 2011

<sup>3</sup> [US saw Cong hand in Sikh massacre](#), reveal Wiki leaks, Times of India, 5/6/11

<sup>4</sup> [Twenty Years of Impunity: The November 1984 Pogroms of Sikhs in India](#), Ensaaf, October 2006

<sup>5</sup> [Truth about Delhi violence: report to the nation](#), Citizens for Democracy (India), 1985

<sup>6</sup> [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Letter to President Barack H. Obama](#), 11/20/2009

<sup>7</sup> [The Original Sin of 1984](#), The Hindu, 11/1/2012

6. Do you agree that thousands of Sikhs were murdered in India in November 1984 with the assistance of or lack of intervention by political parties, law enforcement, military or members of the government?

**Refused to answer 'yes' or 'no'. See response to #7.**

7. Would you, as a Member of Congress, seek to remember and acknowledge the pogroms against Sikhs in November 1984, pursue justice for the victims, and work to ensure it does not happen again?

**Refused to answer 'yes' or 'no'. I am aware that in November 1984, anti-Sikh violence took place in some states of India in the wake of the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her own bodyguard. In remembering the victims and survivors of this tragedy, we can learn, as we have learned from other such tragedies, and as the people of diverse faiths of India have themselves acknowledged over the years, that there is no place for such violence in a free society.**

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As a community, we understand that our elected officials may have limited exposure to Sikhs and Sikhism. However, it is helpful in our evaluation to understand to what extent you may have an existing relationship or set of experiences with Sikhs.

8. Have you ever worked with, employed or been hired by a Sikh? If so, describe this experience.

**Yes, Congressman Bera employed Sikh staff in his role as the Chief Medical Officer for Sacramento County and has had many Sikh colleagues working as medical professionals. His congressional campaign and DC office have also included Sikh volunteer staff.**

9. Have you ever visited a Gurdwara (Sikh house of worship)?  
**Congressman Bera has visited many Sikh Gurdwaras in the Sacramento regions and enjoyed participating in the Yuba City Nagar Kirtan along with Congressman Garamendi.**

10. Do you encourage Sikhs to apply for opportunities with your government office or campaign office, including internships through the [SikhLEAD Internship program](#)? If so, please describe the process by which one may seek employment or internships with these offices, including the name, address and telephone number of the person with hiring responsibility

**Congressman Bera was pleased to have a SikhLead intern in his office in 2013 and looks forward to hosting another intern from this excellent program.**

**Applicants interested in working with the campaign should email:**

**Applicant interested in working at the district office or DC office should email:**