

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. 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 Honda directed his staff to complete a telephone interview during which the following responses were provided.

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, he is an original co-sponsor of the bill.

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, he is a co-founder of the congressional anti-bullying caucus.

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.^{1 2 3} Government officials, law enforcement officers, and military forces failed to prevent or participated in the slaughter.⁴ In many documented incidents, public officials distributed voter lists and weapons used to locate and kill Sikh men, women, and children.⁵ Most of the perpetrators of the pogroms have not been brought to justice⁶ and many have flourished in government and political party positions.⁷

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'. The violence in 1984 was a horrific atrocity. He echoes the most recent White House statement condemning violence against Sikhs. He is a member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and the Congressional International Religious Freedom Caucus.

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'. He has always fought against violations of human rights wherever they arise.

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. He was worked with Sikhs on many occasions in developing legislation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Have you ever visited a Gurdwara (Sikh house of worship)?

Yes. He has visited Gurdwaras on many occasions, including the Fremont and San Jose Sikh temples.

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

Yes. He has a diverse staff and has employed Sikh interns in the past. He is working with SikhLead to employ another intern this summer.