The Honorable Charles Hagel  
Secretary of Defense  
Department of Defense  
Washington, DC 20301  

March 10, 2014  

Dear Secretary Hagel:  

We respectfully request that the United States Armed Forces modernize their appearance regulations so that patriotic Sikh Americans can serve the country they love while abiding by their articles of faith.  

As you know, three devout Sikh Americans have been granted individualized accommodations to serve in the U.S. Army. These patriotic soldiers wear turbans and maintain beards in a neat and conservative manner, both in accordance with operational requirements and their Sikh religious beliefs. They are also able to wear protective equipment, including helmets and gas masks, in conformity with safety requirements.  

These Sikh soldiers have given their all in service of their country. Maj. Kamaljeet Singh Kalsi earned a Bronze Star Medal for his service in Afghanistan, which included treating multiple combat injuries and reviving two clinically dead patients back to life; Capt. Tejdeep Singh Rattan earned a NATO Medal for his service in Afghanistan; and Corporal Simran Preet Singh Lamba successfully graduated from the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) program for his proficiency in Punjabi and Hindi.  

Given the achievements of these soldiers and their demonstrated ability to comply with operational requirements while practicing their faith, we believe it is time for our military to make inclusion of practicing Sikh Americans the rule, not the exception.  

Devout Sikhs have served in the U.S. Army since World War I, and they are presumptively permitted to serve in the armed forces of Canada, India, and the United Kingdom, among others. Notably, the current Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army is a turbaned and bearded Sikh, even though Sikhs constitute less than two percent of India’s population. Throughout the world, and now in the U.S. Army, Sikh soldiers are clearly able to maintain their religious commitments while serving capably and honorably.  

We look forward to working with you to end the presumptive ban on Sikh Americans in the U.S. military and extend opportunity to Sikh Americans who wish to serve and defend our nation.  

Sincerely,  

Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress  

Rodney P. Frelinghuysen  
Member of Congress
David G. Valadao
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress

Joseph J. Heck
Member of Congress

Paul Ryan
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress

Ted Poe
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Kerry L. Bentivolio
Member of Congress

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress
Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

Pete Olson
Member of Congress

Ami Bera
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress

Jeff Denham
Member of Congress

James F. Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress
Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress

Nita M. Lowey  
Member of Congress

Bobby J. Rush  
Member of Congress

Gloria Negrete McLeod  
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress

Ed Pastor  
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress

Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Jerry Nadler
Member of Congress

Steve Israel
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

James P. Moran
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

John F. Tierney  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Gary C. Peters  
Member of Congress

Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Member of Congress

William L. Owens  
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutierrez  
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress
Lois Capps  
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress

Joe Garcia  
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Jared Polis  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Al Green  
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress

Janice D. Schakowsky  
Member of Congress
Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

Susan Brooks  
Member of Congress

David Schweikert  
Member of Congress