

The Honorable Noah Arbit  
Michigan State House  
Cora B. Anderson House Office Building  
PO Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

The Honorable Kristian Grant  
Michigan State House  
Cora B. Anderson House Office Building  
PO Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

The Honorable Ranjeev Puri  
Michigan State House  
Cora B. Anderson House Office Building  
PO Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

May 26, 2023

*Via email*

**Re: HB 4474 (Arbit), HB 4475 (Grant) - Michigan Hate Crime Act (SUPPORT) and HB 4476 (Arbit), HB 4477 (Puri) - Institutional Desecration Act (SUPPORT)**

Dear Representative Arbit, Representative Grant, and Representative Puri,

The Sikh Coalition is pleased to support [HB 4474](#), [HB 4475](#), [HB 4476](#), and [HB 4477](#) which would overhaul Michigan's ethnic intimidation statute and address institutional desecration. The Michigan Hate Crime Act would expand the basis on which hate crimes can be targeted to include: sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical or mental disability, ethnicity, and age; update sentencing guidelines, and begin to develop a restorative justice approach to hate crimes. Institutional Desecration would prohibit the targeted defacement, destruction, and vandalism of institutions and communal property, including houses of worship, cultural or community centers, and businesses as a hate crime. The legislation would provide a more appropriate tool for Michiganders to pursue justice and accountability for hate crimes targeting faith-based institutions and other types of communal property.

By way of background, the Sikh Coalition is the nation's largest Sikh American civil rights and advocacy organization. The Sikh Coalition owes its existence in large part to the effort to combat discrimination and bias against Sikh-Americans after September 11, 2001, including hate crimes and school bullying.



Sikhism is the world's fifth largest religion, with over 25 million followers worldwide. As a community that has proudly been a part of the fabric of Michigan for more than 95 years, our contributions to the state are rich and deep. [As early as 1922](#), Sikh students attended the University of Michigan and went on to work at Ford Motor Company to help build the state's automotive base. Today there are fourteen gurdwaras (Sikh houses of worship) in the state. In nearly every facet of Michigan's society and economy, Sikhs are making a profound impact.

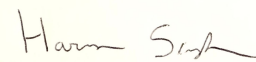
However, Sikhs remain disproportionately targeted in cases of bigotry, bias, bullying and backlash. Relative to other vulnerable minorities, Sikhs are often disproportionately targeted for discrimination because many Sikhs wear turbans and maintain unshorn hair in accordance with their faith. According to the [FBI's data](#), Sikhs were among the top two most targeted faith groups for hate crimes across the country in 2021. Such violence also manifests in our schools, as a [2014 report](#) by the Sikh Coalition found that turbaned Sikh children are bullied at twice the national average, and 67% of turbaned Sikh students are bullied. Michigan has also felt the impact of institutional desecration. In 2012, the Sikh Society of Michigan in Sterling Heights, MI was [vandalized](#) with racial epithets and references to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Michigan must continue to address the critical problem of hate. We strongly believe this legislation will create a safer state for all Michiganders. For more information about the Sikh Coalition's support of HB 4474-4477, please contact Nikki Singh, Senior Manager of Policy and Advocacy at [nikki@sikhcoalition.org](mailto:nikki@sikhcoalition.org).

Respectfully,



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