

December 5, 2008

Via Facsimile (252-537-7373) and Email (edirector@umrr.org)

Mr. Jeff Holm
Chairman, Board of Directors
Union Mission of Roanoke Rapids
1310 Roanoke Avenue
Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina 27870

Re: Equal Accommodation of Interfaith Donors

Dear Mr. Holm:

We, the undersigned individuals and entities, are writing to express grave concern about the expulsion of Mr. Gurnam Singh Khera—a Sikh American donor—by Union Mission of Roanoke Rapids because of his religiously-mandated *Dastaar* (Sikh turban).

The denial of equal accommodation to Mr. Khera is fundamentally inconsistent with the nobility of your work and sends dismissive signals to Sikhs, Jews, Muslims, and other Americans who wear articles of faith in accordance with their religious beliefs. The repudiation of Mr. Khera's donation on account of his religion is reminiscent of the Jim Crow era, when African Americans were denied equal access to public accommodations because of their race.

Now more than ever—and as the holiday season approaches—interfaith groups must celebrate religious diversity in the common cause of helping the less fortunate. To this end, we believe it would be appropriate for Union Mission of Roanoke Rapids to restore its goodwill by issuing a public apology to Mr. Khera and amending its policy to allow visitors to wear articles of faith.

Please confirm that these remedial steps have been taken by contacting Mr. Rajdeep Singh Jolly of the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF). He can be reached via email at rsjolly@saldef.org or by phone at (202) 393-2700 Ext 131.

Sincerely,

American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee
Asian American Justice Center
Hindu American Foundation
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Japanese American Citizens League
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Coalition for the Homeless
North American Religious Liberty Association
Organization of Chinese Americans
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
South Asian Americans Leading Together
Southern Christian Leadership Conference
The Sikh Coalition
United Sikhs