

Rep Honda and TSA Officials Discuss Sikh American Concerns

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In August TSA changed their operating procedures on the screening of headwear, giving their officers more discretion. This apparently led to a rash of incidents in which members of the Sikh American religious community complained they felt harassed. For Sikh Americans, removing their turbans is akin to stripping. Also, Sikh activists said this change was made without consultation with the community, which had been done in past situations.

Honda, who as a child during World War II was interned with his family in camps for Japanese Americans, has been very concerned that TSA's new procedure could lead to profiling. Because of that, he has written letters to TSA and today spoke with Administrator Hawley.

"I want to see a solution that balances both the security of our airports with respect for the Sikh community. From my conversation with Mr. Hawley today, I am thankful for the efforts that TSA is making to address this issue in a timely manner. I know TSA is considering a few options to resolve the problem, and I am eager to hear their proposals," said Honda, chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. "They have acknowledged that this is an important matter to them, which to me shows good will. However, I would like to see something concrete soon. I and my colleagues will continue working with TSA until we have a sensible policy."