



The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

January 20, 2022

RE: Nomination of Paul Monteiro to be Director of the Community Relations Service
at the United States Department of Justice

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) submits this letter to provide our strongest support for the nomination of Paul Monteiro to be Director of the Community Relations Service (CRS) at the United States Department of Justice (DOJ).

Founded in 1996, SALDEF is the nation's oldest Sikh American civil rights, education, and media organization. Our mission is to empower Sikh Americans by building dialogue, deepening understanding, promoting civic participation, and upholding social justice and religious freedom for all Americans.

Over the past twenty years, CRS has been a dedicated partner of the Sikh American community and SALDEF: working to promote understanding of our articles of faith amongst law enforcement; leading efforts to create a first of its kind cultural awareness training video, "On Common Ground"; coming to meet with Sikh American communities impacted by acts of hate and violence; and engaging in outreach and education efforts within our communities and gurdwaras.

Given that long and deep experience, it is extremely important to the Sikh American community that CRS be led by an individual committed to community outreach, promoting understanding, and ensuring CRS fulfills its historic role of being "America's Peacemakers".

Mr. Monteiro has spent his career working to reach out to diverse communities and build bridges between those who are divided. Importantly, he has demonstrated himself to be a partner of diverse and marginalized groups, including the Sikh American community.

While at the White House Office of Public Engagement, he developed and maintained relationships with Sikh American, South Asian, and other Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and organizations across the country. Working with SALDEF, Mr. Monteiro organized first of their kind roundtable discussions for leaders within the Sikh American community, including on topics ranging from entrepreneurship and innovation to medicine and biotechnology. He also promoted public inclusion of Sikh American and South Asians, supporting White House recognition of major holidays and events within their communities.

As the former Acting Director of CRS, he was committed to working with SALDEF and other diverse organizations to address acts of bias and hate crimes, both responding to incidents and promoting prevention strategies. Mr. Monteiro invested in community oriented-policing strategies, including working with us to promote cultural awareness training across federal, state, and local law enforcement. Further, under his leadership, CRS partnered with us to go into Sikh gurdwaras to conduct know your rights and resource presentations across the country. Finally, and most importantly, Mr. Monteiro was a partner with communities that had experienced tragic events of violence and possible hate crimes. He served as an ally and liaison, ensuring these incidents were being investigated thoroughly. And after the incidents, he ensured CRS continued to fulfill their tradition of working with communities to recover and rebuild.

Based on our experiences with Mr. Monteiro, we believe that he has the skills, values, and experience necessary to lead CRS.

For those reasons, SALDEF strongly supports Paul Monteiro to be Director of the Community Relations Service (CRS) at the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at kiran@saldef.org.

Sincerely,

Kiran Kaur Gill
Executive Director