

## BACKGROUNDER – VERSION 2.0 OF FLYRIGHTS

- What is the purpose of the App, FlyRights? - The purpose of this phone application is to provide air travelers an easy way to submit a complaint of unfair treatment by airport screeners with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), their Members of Congress, and/or the Sikh Coalition.
- Why did you create FlyRights?
  - For years, Sikh travelers have complained of discriminatory screening and pat downs at airport checkpoints across the United States. At some airports, [The Sikh Coalition has found that 100% of Sikh travelers](#) report they are subjected to unfair secondary screening.
  - We therefore created this application to bridge the gap between community frustration about airport profiling, TSA screening discrimination, and official action. Complaints filed through the innovative app will be reviewed as official complaints by TSA and DHS.
- What Did You Find Since FlyRights 1.0 was Released? – The release of FlyRights 1.0 in April 2012 confirmed our suspicions that the TSA cannot be trusted to police itself.
  - While DHS [reported to Congress](#) that in 2012 the TSA only received 8 complaints of improper or discriminatory TSA screening, through FlyRights there were 157 such complaints from April 2012 when FlyRights was released until the end of the year.
  - People of all backgrounds are using FlyRights. The following is a breakdown of FlyRights 1.0 complaints by community:
    - Race - 58 complaints or 29%
    - Ethnicity - 47 complaint or 24%
    - Religion - 105 complaints or 53%
    - Nationality - 16 complaints or 8%
    - Gender - 32 complaints or 16%
    - Disability - 17 complaints or 9%
- What is different in FlyRights Version 2.0? –Version 2.0 allows users to copy their Members of Congress when they file a complaint. Users may also compare airports to see which ones have the most complaints.
- What do you want from the TSA? The TSA can't have their cake and eat it too. The TSA tells its screeners not to profile, yet they have not adopted effective measures to guard against it. We want the TSA to implement better safeguards against profiling. In February 2012, the Sikh Coalition released an internal TSA [memorandum](#) obtained through a Freedom of Information Act Request in which a TSA consultant concluded the TSA could viably audit its own screening practices to guard against profiling. We want to get that memorandum off a dusty shelf and implemented on the ground.
- Are Sikhs, Muslims, and South Asians the only groups concerned about TSA profiling? The first year of FlyRights data collection has shown that a wide variety of people are affected by TSA profiling for a multitude of reasons. The Sikh Coalition hopes that FlyRights will help bring attention to all concerns of profiling, Sikh or non-Sikh.

## Quotes from Complaints Filed Using FlyRights 1.0

- "I believe that I was targeted for an unnecessary search... because I am a Black woman with my hair in its natural state."
- "A male TSA officer touched my buttocks and I'm a female. I reported to his supervisor but she didnt take any action."
- "[H]e took one look at me and assumed I am Hispanic and harassed me."
- "I am in a wheelchair, have gone through lots of airports.... [The agent] never asked me if I wanted to have privacy. She groped, and jammed her hands to my privates, in front of everyone. People were shocked going by watching with my arms out and her totally disregard with the tears in my eyes."
- "A woman with a hat certainly less form fitting than my turban goes through without taking it off or getting secondary screened in any way."
- "[H]e passed me off to another agent who wanded my turban and then had me do a self pat down and test. While this was happening at least \*4\* people with sweatshirts sailed pass in my line and the adjacent two."