

### **For Immediate Release**

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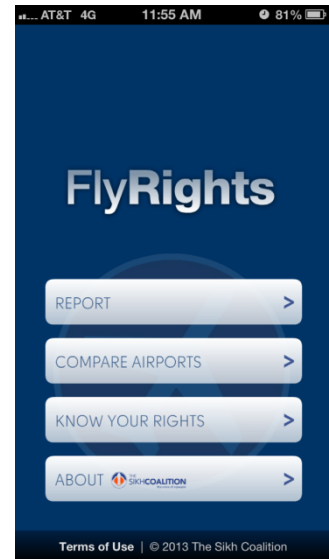
Visit <http://www.fly-rights.org> for more information.

## **2.0 Version of Mobile App to Combat TSA Profiling and Discrimination Takes Flight**

WASHINGTON DC (November 26, 2012) - **This morning, during the busiest travel week of the year, the Sikh Coalition and prominent national civil rights leaders will release version 2.0 of a mobile phone application that enables users to report TSA screening discrimination in real time. FlyRights 2.0 will be launched during a 10:00 a.m. EST launch event at the offices of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, 1629 K Street, NW, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, DC.**

The event will also be live streamed at: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/sikhcoalition>

For years, Sikh travelers have complained of discriminatory TSA screening and pat downs at airport checkpoints across the United States. At some airports, the Sikh Coalition has found that Sikh travelers are subjected to secondary screening [100% of the time](#).



The Sikh Coalition released [FlyRights](#) in April 2012 to bridge the gap between communities affected by discrimination and official government action. Complaints filed through FlyRights are reviewed as official complaints by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The complaints filed through the first version of FlyRights make clear that the TSA is in deep denial about the problem of screening discrimination at American airports. Nearly 20 times more complaints alleging TSA screening discrimination were filed through FlyRights in 2012 than the Department of Homeland Security reported to Congress for the same year.

“FlyRights users have confirmed that we cannot simply trust the TSA to self-report on whether it is engaging in discrimination,” said **Amardeep Singh**, Director of Programs at the Sikh Coalition. “An independent auditor should review and publicly report on the TSA’s screening practices. Only then will we know whether the TSA is remaining true to its own anti-discrimination policies. Until that happens, we call on the public to hold the TSA accountable by downloading and using FlyRights.”

FlyRights 2.0 adds new layers of transparency and visibility to the question of whether TSA is engaging in unlawful discrimination and profiling. The updated app allows travelers to copy their Members of Congress on their complaints of discrimination. The new version of FlyRights also contains a “crowd-sourced” map that allows users to compare the number of complaints filed through FlyRights for each airport in America.

The release of FlyRights 2.0 immediately received support from leaders on Capitol Hill and in the civil rights community. “Airport safety measures based on someone’s race, gender or faith are not safety measures at all – they alienate targeted communities and make victims out of travelers,” said **Congresswoman Judy Chu**, Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. “The new FlyRights mobile app being introduced today will empower travelers to fight back against profiling with new tools.”

“A process for travelers to submit complaints can provide recourse while helping improve TSA’s performance,” said **Congressman John Mica**, former Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and current senior member of the Committee.

“Since the launch of the app, reports of racial profiling and discrimination to the TSA have increased almost 20 fold,” said **Wade Henderson**, President and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. “And while the app was launched to address the pervasive profiling that happens to Sikhs, South Asians, and Muslims, it has been embraced and used by African Americans, wheelchair users, women, Hispanics, and many others.”

To date, over 18,000 people have downloaded the application. FlyRights 2.0 also contains “user notifications” that will allow the Sikh Coalition to send messages and news about airport screening issues directly to users through their phones.

FlyRights 2.0 is available for both Apple and Android phones.

*The Sikh Coalition is the nation’s largest Sikh civil rights organization. It has played a lead role in combating TSA screening discrimination around the United States. The Sikh Coalition has [testified before Congress](#) on the issue, inspired [Congressional sign-on letters](#) questioning TSA search policies, and has filed dozens of complaints of profiling on behalf of Sikh air travelers.*

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## ADDITIONAL QUOTES FROM CIVIL RIGHTS COMMUNITY

“Whether in the form of TSA screening, immigration enforcement, or NYPD surveillance, profiling is ineffective and violates the civil rights of all Americans. Though it is often couched under the name of national security, it wastes our limited government resources and destroys community relationships, making them less likely to reach out to law enforcement and thereby making us *less* safe. While we await the passage of the End Racial Profiling Act in Congress and the elimination of discriminatory profiling procedures, the Fly Rights 2.0 Mobile App provides an immediate avenue for U.S. travelers to track, record and relay their experiences, bringing us one step closer to documenting these civil rights violations, advocating for change, and remedying the harmful and long-lasting effects of racial and religious injustice that continue to plague our nation.”

---- **Deepa Iyer**, Executive Director, South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

“Some law enforcement officials act as if airports are a constitution-free zone, but they’re not. TSA agents should not be targeting travelers based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion. And if they do, travelers should know they have an easy way to report this mistreatment right through their smartphones. Racial profiling should never be part of any traveler’s experience.”

“The federal government should take two steps to make this practice illegal. Congress must pass the End Racial Profiling Act, and the Justice Department needs to finally update its Guidance Regarding the Use of Race by Law Enforcement Officers.”

---- **Jennifer Bellamy**, Legislative Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union

People with disabilities expect the same civil rights and access when flying as all global citizens. TSA officials often do not have the knowledge to appropriately screen a person with a disability with respect and appropriate language and behavior, often violating a person’s civil rights in the process. Inappropriate, often humiliating and invasive comments are made and actions are taken during screenings that are unnecessary and illegal. Preparation and education around ALL disabilities are essential. The new FlyRights mobile app will for the first time allow travelers with disabilities of all races, genders and ethnicities to be able to immediately file a complaint with regards to their experiences and moving us closer to greater inclusivity and civil rights for all.

---- **Rhonda Neuhaus**, Policy Analyst for Government Affairs, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)