

Disney Desegregates Sikh Employee After Civil Rights Groups Intervene

by Emil Guillermo

Mouse ears have generally been considered appropriate attire for Disney World. But apparently not Gurdit Singh's turban, unshorn hair and beard—until a breakthrough occurred at the end of June.

As a Disney World in-house mail carrier, 57-year-old Singh had been barred for seven years by his Disney employers from a wider delivery route in the theme park. He was limited to just one route that essentially kept him hidden from view, unlike his colleagues who were rotated across routes every three weeks. Singh came to see it as "a daily humiliation because of his religious beliefs."

His Disney bosses cited their "Look Policy." Singh abided, until last year when he sought the help of the Sikh Coalition. Along with the American Civil Liberties Union, [the coalition sent a demand letter](#) to Disney last May, asking that Disney, "de-segregate Mr. Singh" to give him the same employment opportunities as his peers, "provide religious accommodation" for his Sikh articles of faith, and "revise Disney's personnel policies," to provide that same accommodation for all employees and ban future segregation based on race/ethnicity, national origin, or religion.

On June 22, [Disney responded with a letter](#) saying the company was committed to diversity and prohibits discrimination based upon religion.



Gurdit Singh, a Sikh employed at Disney World was kept largely hidden from park-goers because he violated Disney's "look policy." After the Sikh Coalition and ACLU inquired, Disney changed its tune. Courtesy: Sikh Coalition