

My name is Nicole Ranganath and I am a History Professor at UC Davis in the Middle East/South Asia Studies Program. I have worked closely with California's Sikh community from South Asia to document their history in California over the last 125 years.

There is an urgent need to include positive teaching about the Sikh community in the curriculum. Despite their contributions, Sikhs remain an underrepresented and marginalized community. Few Americans know that Sikhs have called the United States home since the 1890s. To give one example of the contributions that Sikhs have made to our society, the first Asian American and the first Indian American to be elected to the US Congress was a Sikh American. Dalip Singh Saund was elected to the US Congress in 1956, and served successfully under President Kennedy. Sadly, few Americans have heard his name nor understand the important contributions that Sikhs have made to our society in politics, agriculture, medicine, and many other spheres of life. After decades of being denied US citizenship and basic legal rights, Sikhs were also on the forefront of the civil rights struggle to re-introduce immigration, US citizenship and other legal rights to Asian Americans in the 1940s. I urge you to include more about the history and important contributions of Sikhs to American society in your curriculum.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!