

## Comptroller Backs Sikhs' Call to Change NYPD Dress Rule

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Members of the city's Sikh community are calling on the New York Police Department to lift its restrictions on the type of turbans that officers can wear and the length of beards they can keep.

Sikh organizations held a news conference at the offices of City Comptroller John C. Liu today announcing an initiative to bring pressure on the NYPD to change their rules.

The NYPD currently allows Sikh officers to wear a dark-blue "patka" a head garment commonly worn by younger male children of the faith underneath their official police hats.

"I know lots of Sikhs who want to join the NYPD, but don't because of this regressive policy," said Prabhjot Singh Narula, the co-founder of the Sikh Coalition, in a statement.

Liu has said he would also petition the police to change the regulations.

Turbans are mandatory articles of faith for male Sikhs, and hair is traditionally left untrimmed.

The NYPD has said it makes "reasonable accommodations" for religious beliefs and "already allows Sikh members of the service to wear turbans that fit under department headgear," said NYPD spokesman Paul Browne [in a New York Post article](#) in August. Browne also cited the challenges of having a full beard and wearing emergency equipment, such as a gas mask.

Liu spokesman Michael Loughran said the issue is not only about the ban against turbans and

maintaining full beards in the NYPD, but also about the inclusion of the Sikh community.

“It’s about a police department seeking to be reflective of the community it serves,” he said.

The comptroller, who is also a potential candidate for mayor, plans to visit with members of the Sikh community at their temples, known as gurdwaras, over the next few weeks to gather petition signatures.

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion and the fifth largest organized religion in the world. It was founded by Guru Nanak Dev in the 15th Century. Sikhs follow a set of principles under ten Sikh gurus who succeeded Guru Nanak Dev.

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