



Gurbax S. Malhi, M.P.  
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale

**IMPORTANT**

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

99/12/06

## MALHI DEFENDS RIGHTS OF BOXER IN HOUSE OF COMMONS

Today in the House of Commons Gurbax Malhi MP delivered a statement in support of Pardeep Nagra's right to box. Mr. Malhi demanded that the Secretary of State to Amateur Sport (Hon. Mr. Denis Coderre), withhold any federal funding to the Canadian Amateur Boxing Association, the association banning Pardeep from boxing, "as it is an organization whose rules are contrary to Canada's fundamental freedoms." "To disallow Pardeep the right to box in the National Competition because he has a beard, which is a crucial part of his Sikh faith, is contradictory to our freedom of religion," said Mr. Malhi.

Mr. Malhi stated:

MR. SPEAKER, A GREAT INJUSTICE HAS OCCURRED IN THIS GREAT NATION OF OURS, WHICH TRADITIONALLY VALUES THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION.

PARDEEP NAGRA, A BRIGHT YOUNG MAN, DEEPLY INVOLVED IN MANY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS IN MY RIDING, HAS HAD HIS LIBERTY SUPPRESSED.

THE ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION; THE BRITISH COLUMBIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION; AND THE ONTARIO SUPERIOR COURT, ALL AGREE THAT PARDEEP HAS THE RIGHT TO BOX IN THE NATIONAL COMPETITION, AND SHOULD NOT BE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO JUST BECAUSE HE IS A BEARDED SIKH.

MR. SPEAKER, I REQUEST THAT THE MINISTER FOR AMATEUR SPORT WITHHOLD ANY FUNDING TO THE CANADIAN AMATEUR BOXING ASSOCIATION IMMEDIATELY, AS IT IS AN ASSOCIATION WHOSE RULES ARE CONTRARY TO CANADA'S FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS. (HANSARD)

For further information please contact Antonios Antoniou (Parliamentary Assistant) at 613-992-9106

Gurbax S. Malhi M.P.  
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6  
Tel: (613) 992-9105, (905) 790-9211  
Fax: (613) 947-0443, (905) 790-9570

Rogers also said the premises are not appropriate for the use from the point of view of the health of the animals. At least one animal was removed from the property by the Humane Society because of illness and charges are pending as a result.

## MP fights for boxer

Canada's first Sikh Member of Parliament, Gurbax Singh Malhi, has come to the defence of a Sikh boxer who was banned from competition because of his long beard.

"A great injustice has occurred in this great nation of ours, which traditionally values the principle of freedom of religion," Malhi told the House of Commons Monday.

The MP for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springfield was referring to the case of Perdeep Nagra, a boxer who was refused permission to take part in this week's Canadian Amateur Boxing Association (CABA) championship. Organizers said the beard Nagra wears for religious reasons is not permitted under rules which require boxers to be clean shaven at the weigh-in.

Nagra's lawyers obtained a court order to force the fight to go ahead, but organizers of the championship cancelled the competition for his entire weight class to avoid breaching the order.

In his presentation to Parliament, Malhi said the boxer is deeply involved in many community associations in his riding. He asked the Minister for Amateur Sport to withhold funding to the CABA, "as it is an association whose rules are contrary to Canada's fundamental freedoms."

