

Harjit Kaur

equalrights.org/about-era/staff/harjit-kaur/

Pro Bono Coordinating Attorney

Initiative to End Sexual Violence in Education (ESVE)

Harjit Kaur comes to ERA with over seven years of professional community advocacy and organizing experience as a civil rights, human rights, immigration and family law attorney. Harjit has provided extensive pro bono legal services to victims of domestic violence in immigration and family law proceedings. In 2014, Harjit served as co-counsel in an unprecedented criminal defense case in which a Sutter County woman was unanimously acquitted of first-degree murder due to self-defense and the defense of another (her unborn child). This was a highly controversial and novel case that placed evidence of female infanticide, sex-selective abortions, domestic violence, dowry, and culture at issue.



Harjit has dedicated her legal and advocacy career to providing access to justice for underrepresented communities, and conducted numerous civil/human rights presentations and bullying prevention seminars in educational institutions, government agencies, and corporations. Among Harjit's many legislative victories, she successfully advocated before the California Department of Education and the California State Board of Education for the inclusion of Sikh history in K-12 curriculum. She also successfully co-drafted legislation addressing bullying prevention in California schools (Safe Pace to Learn Act; AB 2845 – Williams). Harjit is also proud to have helped pass the nation's strongest bill against religious discrimination for workers in California (California Workplace Religious Freedom Act; AB 1964 - Yamada). In 2018, Harjit was also honored to be a contributor to the novel *"American Hate: Survivors Speak Out"* (Edited by Arjun Singh Sethi).

Harjit is active in numerous Bay Area and Sacramento community organizations and has served as a former commissioner on the Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Council as well as a former school board member and secretary for Sacramento Valley Charter School. Harjit was also appointed by the California State Board of Education as an Instructional Materials Reviewer from 2017-2018.

As a community leader and advocate, Harjit has received numerous honors for her work and is frequently invited to speak on these issues. In 2017, Harjit was recognized by the South Asian Bar Association (Northern California Chapter) with a Community Impact Award. In 2016, Harjit was recognized by the Sacramento South Asian Bar Association with a

Community Service Award. In 2016, Harjit was also recognized by Assembly Member Jim Cooper for her dedication to Sikh civil rights and advocacy with a Sikh Awareness & Appreciation Month Assembly Recognition.

Joining ERA as the Pro Bono Coordinating Attorney in November 2018, Harjit will lead our End Sexual Violence in Education (ESVE) Initiative to close the access to justice gap for students facing sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence in schools and universities. Harjit will be building a network of trained pro bono attorneys to provide critically needed legal assistance and advocacy, providing students with access to high-quality, confidential, independent legal support and assistance.

Harjit is a native of Sonoma County and graduate of Santa Rosa Junior College where she graduated *cum laude* with an Associate of Arts in Political Science (2003) and a graduate of Sonoma State University where she graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (2005). She received her Juris Doctor from University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law (2011). Harjit is an avid artist and known for her work on social media as @KaurArts.