

Amrith Kaur Aakre joined the Sikh Coalition in August 2017 as Legal Director. In this role, she focuses on high-impact litigation and oversees all legal work while managing initiatives to protect the civil rights of all Americans in areas such as workplace discrimination, hate crimes, school bullying, racial and religious profiling, and general religious rights and policy issues.

Under Amrith's leadership, the Sikh Coalition's legal team has successfully litigated religious accommodation and bias-based school bullying cases, advocated on behalf of hate crime victims and provided rapid response legal services, submitted public comments to numerous federal agencies regarding fair interpretations of their policies as well as testimony before the EEOC regarding emerging employment discrimination issues including those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, and drafted several amicus briefs that were cited by ScotusBlog as "petitions to watch." She has also coordinated with local and federal law enforcement agencies to provide cultural competence training geared toward workplace and public accommodations equity. Recently, Amrith oversaw the Sikh Coalition's collaboration with the Harvard Law School Religious Freedom Clinic and Stanford Law School Religious Liberty Clinic, resulting in a first of its kind report and practical guide called [*Well-Founded Fear: Understanding Legal Challenges and Best Practices for Sikh Asylum Applicants and Their Attorneys*](#).

As a recognized expert on issues of racial and religious freedom, Amrith has represented the Sikh Coalition at multiple conferences and panels across the country. In 2021, the Legal Team hosted its first annual CLE conference, *Realizing Justice For All*, focused on civil rights challenges. Also last year, Amrith spoke at the Aspen Institute's Inclusive America Project on the future of religious freedom; at the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding's Religious Freedom Summit; and presented and moderated employment discrimination panels at the NAPABA Annual Conference, before the Illinois Human Rights Commission, and numerous state bar associations. Previously, Amrith has presented nationally on a variety of topics ranging from civil rights issues in immigration detention centers to the legal standards involved in the intersectionality of racial, religious, and caste-based discrimination for the South Asian Bar Association, the DFW Alliance for Religious Freedom, Tanenbaum, and Brigham Young University's Religious Freedom Annual Review.

Prior to joining the Sikh Coalition, Amrith served as a Cook County Assistant State's Attorney in Chicago, IL for 11 years. During this time, she supervised the felony Bond Court Initiative and led transformative projects to identify non-violent offenders for alternative rehabilitation programs, in addition to training police officers on Crisis Intervention Training protocol. Additionally, Amrith served in both the criminal and civil bureaus, was appointed to the Cook

County State's Attorney's Hate Crime Advisory Council, and served as a liaison with the Department of Justice's Hate Crime Training Initiative. As a highly experienced prosecutor, she also brings seasoned media experience to the job and has a background in policymaking after co-drafting a Senate resolution that successfully strengthened existing hate crime prosecution laws after 9/11.

Amrith is the 2021 recipient of the South Asian Bar Association of Chicago's Public Interest Lawyer award. She serves as a member of the Board of Directors for SABA-Chicago, the ACLU of Illinois, and is on the leadership committee for the American Bar Association's Religious Liberty Section. She is also a guest lecturer at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, DePaul University, was the 2017 recipient of the Asian American Coalition's Community Service of the year award, served as an Emerging Leaders Fellow for the Chicago Council on Global Affairs where she focused on implementing cultural competency training and policy initiatives for law enforcement agencies, and was recognized by Crain's Business New York as a Leading Woman Lawyer.

Amrith holds her Bachelor of Arts in Applied Science & Technology Engineering and English Literature from The George Washington University, where she participated in the grassroots activism that helped form the Sikh Coalition in 2001, and her Juris Doctor from The University of Illinois at Chicago's John Marshall Law School. When not working, Amrith enjoys exploring her hometown of Chicago with her husband and two children, running, teaching a HIIT Bootcamp class, and reading.

Select articles, publications and appearances: NBC News, BuzzFeed News, NBC News, The Guardian, ABC News, New York Times, NDTV, [The Chicago Sun Times](#), The Tribune, Crains New York, India Times, ScotusBlog, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Huffington Post, Universal News Reporter, and the Chicago Sun-Times.