

F L O R I N
J a p a n e s e A m e r i c a n



J A C L
C i t i z e n s L e a g u e

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March 7, 2011

Chief Robert M. Lehner
Elk Grove Police Department
8400 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, California 95758

Subject: Prioritizing the March 4th Shootings of Sikh Residents Surinder Singh & Gurmeje Atwal

Dear Chief Lehner:

We and many other community members are dismayed at the despicable March 4th shooting and possible hate crime in Elk Grove against two elderly Sikh gentlemen, Surinder Singh, who died from his injuries, and Gurmeje Atwal. We call on the Elk Grove Police Department and the City of Elk Grove to place the highest priority on investigating this heinous crime and fully prosecuting the perpetrators, including calling on State and Federal support as needed.

As a law enforcement leader, we know you are familiar with the rise in bigotry, hatred, and violence against innocent Sikh, Muslim, and Arab Americans after 9/11. Our Sikh, Muslim, and Arab American neighbors, friends, and co-workers need the fullest protection of the law especially when an entire people can be wantonly targeted, not for any individual wrong-doing, but for their religion, dress, or ethnicity.

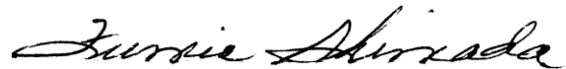
Unfortunately, the hate-mongers and fringe elements believe they have a license to strike out against these innocent Americans during times of post 9/11 national crisis. A united community, partnering with vigilant law enforcement and strong political leadership, can successfully stand up to this threat.

Many of our Florin J.A.C.L. members are residents of Elk Grove and especially share these concerns about this attack. Additionally, the Japanese American community, following Japan's December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, once suffered skyrocketing assaults, vandalism, home burnings, and even murders of innocent people before the mass incarceration of 120,000 people. Our community knows full well the dangerous times we face today and that we need to unite and speak up to counter another tragic stain on our American fabric.

We appreciate the vigorous investigation and prosecution of this horrendous crime.

Sincerely,

Marielle Tsukamoto
Florin JACL President



Fumie Shimada
Civil Rights Co-Chair
Florin J.A.C.L.



Andy Noguchi
Civil Rights Co-Chair
Florin J.A.C.L.

cc: Mayor Steven M. Detrick
Elk Grove City Hall
10250 Iron Rock Way
Elk Grove, CA 95624

The Florin Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is a grass roots community organization founded in 1935 in the former Florin farming community of south Sacramento. It is a chapter of the national JACL, the oldest and largest Asian Pacific American civil rights organization in the country. Over the past 30 years, the Florin JACL has actively led efforts for multi-cultural understanding in the Sacramento region. It has forged successful educational partnerships, reaching thousands of people each year, with the Elk Grove Unified School District; California State University at Sacramento; and the California State Museum for History, Women, and the Arts focusing on the Japanese American experience and its important constitutional issues for all Americans today. Website: www.florinjacl.com