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My brothers and I loved sports growing up, and as kids, we dreamed of playing professional soccer and basketball. We played club and recreational, and we played for our middle school basketball teams.

Imagine our surprise when our oldest brother, Harpreet, went to try out for the high school basketball team and was told that the state rules didn't allow him to play with his turban. Rather than playing the sport he loved and deserved to play, my brother spent his entire freshman season petitioning the state governing body to change their rules to allow him to play.

Soccer was my primary love, and I had encounters with religious discrimination too. After multiple incidents where referees and opposing coaches insisted I couldn't play while wearing a turban, I began petitioning the United States Soccer Federation to change its rules to allow religious minorities to play while maintaining their religious garb. I remember thinking how unfair it was to be asked to choose between two things I cherished most: my love for my faith and my love for sports. I also remember wondering how this could be legal. Hadn't we learned in school that religious freedom was one of our country's founding principles?

By this point we had learned an important lesson. It wasn't enough to seek an exception to a rule that discriminated against us. We needed to ensure better rules that accounted for everyone in our communities. With my parent's guidance, we helped create a rule change that didn't just give me the right to play soccer, or even just allow Sikhs to play with their turbans. My parents were clear that this rule had to explicitly account for everyone, including Jews who wear kippahs and Muslims who wear hijabs.

A few years later, my younger brother Darsh blossomed into a high school basketball star and became the first turbaned basketball player in NCAA history. His jersey hung in the Smithsonian, inspiring young people of all backgrounds that they can all overcome the barriers that obstruct them.

But this also raises an interesting question for us. What if we learned from our experiences of hardship and helped remove some of the inequitable barriers that our children face? What if we recognized that some rules are unnecessarily exclusive and put people we care about in the same tough positions my brothers and I face growing up, of having to make a false choice between our love for faith and love for sports?

The next step to me is clear. It's time we begin to updating our policies to account for the diverse communities that make up America – and that includes religious communities too. I look forward to seeing this change in our society with the passage of SB951, and I'm grateful to the state of Maryland for setting the example of what our country can and should be.

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