CAIR WASHINGTON

February 27, 2012

Mr. ██████ ████████
████████████████████
Bellevue/Seattle Office
███████████████████
Bellevue, Washington 98006

Via U.S. Mail and Facsimile: ████████

Re: Request for religious accommodations for Muslim employee, Mr. ████████

Dear Mr. ██████:

I hope this letter reaches you in the best of health and spirits. We are contacting you on behalf of Mr. ████████, a member of the American Muslim community and employee with ████████ ████████ since September 2, 2011. We are requesting adequate and reasonable religious accommodations for Mr. ██████, who wears a beard for religious purposes. Mr. █████ has authorized the Washington State chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-WA) to contact you on his behalf, in a signed statement enclosed with this letter.

According to Mr. ██████, he has previously worn a beard as an employee with ██████ ████████ ██████. Mr. ██████ also informed our office that he has recently been informed of his new placement at the ██████ campus in Bellevue, Washington. During a conversation with someone from the Human Resources department, Mr. ██████ was told by Ms. █████ █████ that he would no longer be able to maintain his beard, as the ████████ campus allows mustaches for security personnel, but not beards.

Devout Muslim men believe that they must grow a beard in observance of the practice of the Prophet Muhammad, and it this religious practice that Mr. ██████ observes as a practicing Muslim.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects an employee from religious discrimination and gives the employer an affirmative obligation to maintain a work environment free of harassment, intimidation, and insult. After an employee notifies the employer of her/his need for a religious accommodation, the employer must accommodate the individual's religious practice unless it causes them undue hardship.

Courts have consistently found that accommodating employees with religiously mandated beards does not cause an undue hardship on employers. A recent federal appeals court ruling upheld two Muslim police officers' right to wear beards for religious reasons. Companies that have altered their policies to allow Muslim men to keep facial hair include Coca-Cola and Adirondack Transit Lines.[1]

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[1] Khan, Salina. "Employers Adjust to Muslim Customs," USA Today. *Available at:*
http://www.jannah.org/articles/usatodayemployers.html

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Council on American-Islamic Relations
Washington State Chapter
9594 First Avenue Northeast, Suite 272, Seattle, Washington 98115
info@cairseattle.org 206.367.4081 www.cairseattle.org

Therefore, we respectfully request the following of ███████████████████ :

1. Grant Mr. ███████ request for religious accommodation by allowing him to wear his religious mandated beard;

2. Clarify the religious accommodation policies of ████████████████████. to ensure that they are consistent with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and educate all employees on this policy;

3. Clarify the religious accommodation policies in the contract between ███████████████ ██████ and the ██████ Corporation for contracted security personnel;

4. Provide documentation of any and all policies addressed in the above requests and any changes made to these policies as a result of our request.

We appreciate the clear efforts of ████████████████████ to accommodate the religious beliefs and practices of all employees. Further, we look forward to working with you to provide adequate accommodations for Muslim men who wear religiously mandated beards. We hope you understand that we send our request in a spirit of coöperation rather than hostility.

Please do not hesitate to reach me via e-mail at jgist@cair.com or via phone at 206.367.4081. We look forward to your positive reply.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Gist
Civil Rights Coordinator

Enclosure: Signed Information Release Statement

Cc: Mr. ███████████, President and CEO, ████████████████████.
        Board of Directors, █████ Corporation
        Ms. ███████████, Chief People Officer, ██████ Corporation
        Mr. S. Arsalan Bukhari, Executive Director, CAIR-WA
        Mr. ███████████