

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM11.20	ACTION			Ward: All
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City of Toronto Condemning Quebec's Bill 21 (An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State) - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Josh Matlow

** Notice of this Motion has not been given. A two-thirds vote is required to waive notice.
* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.
* This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Josh Matlow, recommends that:

1. City Council oppose Quebec's Bill 21, An Act respecting the laicity of the State and reaffirm the City's commitment to upholding religious freedoms as outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
2. City Council endorse the initiative proposed by Calgary City Council and supported by the Regional Municipality of Peel that asks the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination, of which the City of Toronto is a member, to create a nationwide campaign that highlights the harmful widespread impacts of Bill 21 on social cohesion and inclusion in Canada.
3. City Council encourage the Federal government to unequivocally condemn and challenge Quebec's Bill 21.

Summary

On June 16, 2019 Quebec's provincial government passed, Bill 21, An Act respecting the laicity of the State. Bill 21 is a legislated ban on public servants in Quebec who wish to publicly display religious symbols. Bill 21 will ban police officers, teachers, bureaucrats from wearing religious symbols such as Hijabs, Sikh turbans, and Jewish Kippah.

Bill 21 is a strategic attempt to stifle and limit the civic participation of individuals who choose to wear religious symbols under the guise of secularism. This Bill disproportionately impacts Muslims, Sikhs, and Jews who all participate in different forms of religious symbols.

On June 17, 2019, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, National Council of Canadian Muslims, and Ischrahk Nourel Hak filed a constitutional challenge of law. This misguided Bill is

a significant step toward the growing polarization and marginalization of religious minorities. As the largest municipality in Canada and one of the most diverse cities in the world, the City of Toronto should join a growing group of Canadian municipalities that have publicly condemned Quebec's Bill 21.

This Motion is urgent as Bill 21 is currently before the courts. There is an upcoming hearing in November to determine if Quebec's religious symbols law should be suspended.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM11.20