



Council Member Motion
Committee of the Whole Meeting of July 11, 2019

Date: July 5, 2019

From: Councillor Sharmarke Dubow

Subject: Bill 21 Secularism Legislation

Background:

The City of Victoria is a culturally diverse place – we are home to culturally diverse neighbourhoods that are honoured and our city is especially honoured to sit on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People where people have lived and welcomed newcomers for thousands of years.

Recently, the Province of Quebec enacted An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State (also known as Bill 21), which prohibits the wearing of religious symbols, including turbans, hijabs, Kippa and many others, by public service employees or employees of municipal or other publicly funded bodies. This legislation, although presented as promoting religious neutrality of the state, is a thinly veiled attack on religious and cultural traditions of religious minorities. It is contrary to Canadian values, which include freedom of religion and acceptance of diversity.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) have initiated a constitutional challenge of the new law in the courts.

Whereas the City of Victoria consists of a diverse community, many of whom wear religious symbols including turbans, hijabs, Kippa, the cross and many others; and

Whereas the fundamental right of religious freedom is enshrined by Canadian constitutional protections; and

Whereas the City of Victoria stands firmly to support religious freedom; and

Whereas Victoria stands for diversity and Canadian multiculturalism and Council bears a responsibility to stand up in defence of the Canadian multicultural mosaic;

Therefore Be It Resolved That the City of Victoria supports in principle the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) in their legal challenge against Bill 21 in Quebec.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Dubow'.

Councillor Sharmarke Dubow