



February 2, 2022

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of Victoria City Council, requesting favourable consideration and resolutions of support for the current legal challenge against the discrimination of freedom of religion in Quebec's Bill 21 - An Act respecting the laicity of the State.

In July 2019, Victoria joined Brampton, Ontario in condemning Quebec's ban of religious symbols at work, and many Canadian municipalities to support the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) in their legal challenge against Bill 21 in Quebec.

Since then, cities across Canada have been demonstrating leadership with the cities of Brampton and Toronto each pledging \$100,000 to support the legal challenges brought forward by the NCCM, WSO, and CCLA. The cities of Calgary, London, Mississauga and Winnipeg have opposed Bill 21 and are considering financial aid as well. Brampton's Mayor Patrick Brown has also issued an appeal to 100 Canadian Mayors to join the Brampton City Council in the fight against Quebec's Bill 21.

Victoria Council values the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and believes we cannot allow the defense of the Charter and the foundational value of religious freedom to be on the backs of racialized communities against the Province of Quebec with unlimited legal resources. Additionally, a Supreme Court decision allowing the infringement of religious freedom would have negative consequences for Victorians and all Canadians.

Therefore, Victoria City Council has authorized funding of \$9500, based on a contribution of 10 cents per capita from the 2022 contingency, to the joint legal challenges of Bill 21 by National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA).

.../2

"The City of Victoria recognizes the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations in whose traditional territories we live and work "Hay swx qa"

THE CITY OF VICTORIA



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Please see the attached Appendix for a copy of the Council Member Motion which was approved on January 6, 2022 Council. We invite all those copied to share this letter with their members and to support the legal challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Helps".

Lisa Helps
Victoria Mayor

Cc: Union of British Columbia Municipalities
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities
Capital Regional District
Members of Parliament that represent British Columbia
Members of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

"The City of Victoria recognizes the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations in whose traditional territories we live and work "Hay swx qa"

RECOMMENDATIONS

Therefore Be It Resolved:

1. That the City of Victoria support the current legal challenge against the discrimination of freedom of religion in Quebec's Bill 21 - An Act respecting the laicity of the State; and
2. That the Council of the Corporation of the City of Victoria authorize funding of up to \$50,000 from the 2022 Contingency to the joint legal challenges of Bill 21 by National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), with staff identifying the appropriate funding source; and
3. That a copy of this Resolution be sent to:
 - a. the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities requesting they share with all their members inviting municipal and local authorities to support the legal challenge; and
 - b. the Capital Regional District and all Members of Parliament-House of Commons that represent British Columbia, and all Members of the legislative assembly of British Columbia.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharmarke Dubow