

Sent by Email

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
pm@pm.gc.ca

Subject: Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton
Re: Letter to 100 Canadian Cities regarding Quebec's Bill 21

Gary Collins, Office of the Mayor, City of Brampton
Re: Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown Invites 100 Canadian Cities to Fight Bill 21

Ralph Walton, Regional Clerk/Director of Legislative Services
The Regional Municipality of Durham
Re: Discrimination of Freedom of Religion in Quebec's Bill 21
Corr. 01-22
File: A-1400-001-22

The Council of The Corporation of the City of Pickering considered the above matter at a meeting held on January 24, 2022 and adopted the following resolution:

1. That Corr. 01-22, from the City of Brampton, and the Regional Municipality of Durham, dated December 2021, regarding Quebec's Bill 21, be received and endorsed, and that the City contribute \$10,000 toward the legal challenge; and,
2. That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, Durham MP's, Durham MPP's, Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton, the Regional Municipality of Durham, and Durham Region Municipalities.

A copy of the original correspondence is attached for your reference.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at 905.420.4660, extension 2019.

Yours truly



Susan Cassel
City Clerk

SC:am
Enclosure

Copy: The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
The Hon. Erin O'Toole, Member of Parliament, Durham
The Hon. Mark Holland, Member of Parliament, Ajax
Ryan Turnbull, Member of Parliament, Whitby
Colin Carrie, Member of Parliament, Oshawa
Jamie Schmale, Member of Parliament, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock
Jennifer O'Connell, Member of Parliament, Pickering-Uxbridge
The Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Member of Provincial Parliament, Pickering-Uxbridge
Rod Phillips, Member of Provincial Parliament, Ajax
Laurie Scott, Member of Provincial Parliament, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock
Lindsey Park, Member of Provincial Parliament, Durham
Lorne Coe, Member of Provincial Parliament, Whitby
Jennifer French, Member of Provincial Parliament, Oshawa
Mayor Patrick Brown, City of Brampton
Ralph Walton, Regional Clerk, Regional Municipality of Durham
Nicole Cooper, Director of Legislative & Information Services, Town of Ajax
June Gallagher, Municipal Clerk, Municipality of Clarington
Chris Harris, Clerk, Town of Whitby
Fernando Lamanna, Clerk, Township of Brock
Debbie Leroux, Clerk, Township of Uxbridge
Mary Medeiros, City Clerk, City of Oshawa
Becky Jamieson, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk, Township of Scugog

Chief Administrative Officer



MAYOR PATRICK BROWN

December 15, 2021

Dear Mayor:

Last week Fatemeh Anvari lost her job as a teacher because of what she chose to wear.

She has deeply held religious beliefs.
She didn't talk about her religion in the classroom.
She didn't write about her religion on social media.
She didn't refuse to do her job.
She wore a headscarf. You may know it as a hijab.

She was "reassigned" because of the way she looks. It's currently legal to do this in parts of Canada; namely, Quebec.

Under Quebec's Bill 21, frontline civil servants who display religious symbols while working can be fired, or reassigned.

I don't need to tell you that Jewish women who wear wigs, Sikh men who wear turbans, Christians who wear a cross are all at risk of being victims of this un-Canadian legislation, which infringes on the fundamental rights of Canadians by discriminating against their religious freedom.

Like me, you've probably considered how you can use your position to affect a better outcome.

I am writing to you with an urgent request to make a financial contribution to help fight Bill 21 in the courts. Together, we can make history by showing solidarity with faith communities living in Quebec, who are being subjected to the detrimental consequences of this bill.

Our collective support as mayors of major urban centres would send a message to our federal government, opposition leaders, and all provincial MPPs and MLAs. It would tell them that we expect all citizens to be treated equally, and without discrimination under the law.

I truly believe the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms should not be treated like a doormat at the entryway to discrimination. It's a sacred document and should be treated as such.



MAYOR PATRICK BROWN

It occurred to me that Canada has a long history of women leading the fight on issues of human rights; Nellie McClung, Viola Desmond, and now we have Fatemeh Anvari.

We all know challenging Bill 21 is the right thing to do.

Most municipalities have spoken out and denounced Bill 21. Brampton City Council already voted to help fund the court challenge to Bill 21. Gone are the days when we can turn a blind eye to an injustice we see across municipal, provincial, and even federal boundaries. Quebecers of all faiths are our brothers and sisters. They need our help.

Let there be no doubt, we live in the best country in the world. However, that does not negate the dark history of our distant and recent past.

Not every Canadian knows that when the MS St Louis carrying 900 Jewish refugees was turned back from Canadian shores, it was done so during an era when the philosophy of “none being too many” was the order of the day. The Komagata Maru was a ship of Sikh men and women being turned back simply because of their faith and the colour of their skin. The internment of Japanese and Italian Canadians is also a dark stain on the history of Canada.

Canadian Prime Ministers have expressed regret for these terrible tragedies in our country's history. In some instances, compensation has been paid by taxpayers. It wasn't necessary to do things this way, after all. Then why didn't anyone have the audacity to speak up at the time?

You and I know that Bill 21 is the type of law that future Prime Ministers will be apologizing for and taxpayers will once again be on the hook for compensation.

It doesn't have to be that way. It's time to speak up.

As Canadians in positions of leadership, we must appeal to the better angels of our nature and demonstrate that we recognise that protecting the rights of religious and racialized minorities is what distinguishes Canada as the best nation in the world. There is a struggle for the soul of this country being waged right now in our country's courts.

We can sit on the sidelines and let intolerance, hate, and injustice win the day. However, I am suggesting that we stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow Canadians and say “no” to turning back the hands of time to an era of intolerance. We can say “no” to disguise Islamophobia in the thin and tattered veil of secularism. We can say no to Bill 21.



MAYOR PATRICK BROWN

Last week, Mustafa Farooq, who heads the National Council of Canadian Muslims, was quoted as saying, “we’ve been fighting this from day one. It’s been resting on the backs of racialized communities and brave human rights defenders.”

Noa Mendelsohn Aviv, a director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association told Global News “This situation is a horrible, harmful lesson in injustice and discrimination and the children know that.”

Bill 21 is in stark conflict with everything we've been taught and everything we've taught our children about who we are as a country. It's a fact that even young children in the classroom are aware of.

The financing of this important legal battle should not be on the backs of racialized minorities when the outcome can leave an indelible stain on the fabric of our whole country. Various community organizations have already mobilised and embarked on a major fundraising push. However, they may need an additional \$1.9 million to see this through to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The federal government has abandoned its leadership role and provinces have been loath to meddle in Quebec politics. The mayors of Canada’s most diverse cities now have to step in and step up. Residents hear us “talk the talk”. Now we have to “walk the walk.” Let’s walk together in this struggle. Don’t leave Fatemeh Anvari to walk alone.

As I mentioned, Brampton City Council approved a motion on June 26 of 2019 to support the court challenge being launched by the National Council of Canadian Muslims and others in any way possible. Your council can do the same.

Let us not sit back and watch a future prime minister apologise for our collective negligence on this critical issue, thirty years from now. Instead, let’s do the right thing today and say “no” to Bill 21 and “yes” to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Don’t just do it for Fatemeh Anvari. Do it for the hundreds of thousands of racialized people of faith who are putting their faith in our democratic and judicial system. I'm confident that you will not let them down.

Contact my office directly at Patrick.Brown@Brampton.ca to learn more about how we can coordinate our efforts in defence of Canadians in need of our help.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.



2 Wellington St W
Brampton ON
L6Y4R2

T 905.874.2600
F 905.874.2620
TTY 905.874.2130



MAYOR PATRICK BROWN

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Brown', written in a cursive style.

Patrick Brown
Mayor



MAYOR PATRICK BROWN

BRAMPTON MAYOR PATRICK BROWN INVITES 100 CANADIAN CITIES TO FIGHT BILL 21

BRAMPTON, ON (December 14, 2021)- Brampton's Mayor Patrick Brown has issued an appeal to 100 Canadian Mayors to join the Brampton city council in the fight against Quebec's Bill 21. Mayors and their councils have been invited to donate to the legal fund fighting Bill 21 in the courts.

In a letter dated December 14, 2021, Brown says Bill 21 is the type of legislation that "future Prime Ministers will be apologizing for." Brown's letter comes on the heels of an incident in Quebec where a teacher lost her job and was reassigned because she wore a headscarf. Brown wrote, "Last week Fatemeh Anvari lost her job as a teacher because of how she looks. Under Quebec's Bill 21, frontline civil servants who display religious symbols while working can be fired, or reassigned."

Brown noted, "Jewish women who wear wigs, Sikh men who wear turbans, Christians who wear a cross are all at risk of being victims of this unCanadian legislation. I am writing to you with an urgent request to help defend the rights of all Canadians. Together, we can make history by showing solidarity with faith communities living in Quebec, who are being subjected to the injurious nature of Bill 21."

Brown stated, "As Mayors of major urban centres, we should send a message to our federal government, opposition leaders, and all provincial MPPs and MLAs who have left a vacuum. Together, we should tell them that we expect all citizens to be treated equally, and without discrimination under the law. This fight should not be shouldered solely by religious and racialized minorities in Canada. Cities have a vital role to play."

Brown noted that Bill 21 tramples basic Canadian rights. "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms should not be treated like a doormat at the entry way to discrimination. It's a sacred document and should be treated as such." Acknowledging that it may be unpopular with some constituents Brown added, "I am asking you to join Brampton City Council in funding the court challenge to Bill 21."

"Gone are the days when we can turn a blind eye to an injustice we see across municipal, provincial, and even federal boundaries. Quebecers of all faiths are our brothers and sisters. They need our help. A contribution from 100 municipalities across Canada is a small price to pay versus the reputational harm that Canada will suffer and the future financial compensation that may come about if we allow this to stand. Racism is expensive. Doing the right thing is a good investment."

Brampton council voted on June 26, 2019 to support the efforts by the World Sikh Organization, the National Council of Canadian Muslims and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association in their legal battle.

Brown concluded, "Let's walk together in this struggle. Don't leave Fatemeh Anvari to walk alone."

-30-

CONTACT:

Gary Collins, Office of the Mayor

Gary.Collins@Brampton.ca

647-409-5598



The Regional
Municipality
of Durham

Corporate Services
Department
Legislative Services

605 Rossland Rd. E.
Level 1
PO Box 623
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3
Canada

905-668-7711
1-800-372-1102
Fax: 905-668-9963

durham.ca

Don Beaton, BCom, M.P.A.
Commissioner of Corporate
Services

THIS LETTER HAS BEEN FORWARDED
TO THE EIGHT AREA CLERKS

December 23, 2021

N. Cooper, Clerk
Town of Ajax
65 Harwood Avenue South
Ajax, ON L1S 2H9

Dear Ms. Cooper:

**RE: Discrimination of Freedom of Religion in Quebec's Bill 21
Our File: C00**

Council of the Region of Durham, at its meeting held on December 22, 2021, adopted the following resolution:

"Whereas Durham Region 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 protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

And Whereas Durham Region, as one of Canada's fastest growing and most multicultural and diverse regional municipalities, stands firmly to support religious freedom as this is aligned with our Freedom of Rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights;

And Whereas Durham Region stands in solidarity with National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) in their legal challenge against Bill 21 in Quebec;

And Whereas Durham Regional Council believes that our region is the cultural centre for diversity and Canadian multiculturalism and Council bears a responsibility to stand up in defence of the Canadian multicultural mosaic;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Durham Regional Council support in principle the legal challenge against the discrimination of freedom of religion in Quebec's Bill 21; and

That staff be directed to report back on ways Durham Region could financially support the legal challenge by providing one-time funding not to exceed \$50,000.”

Ralph Walton

Ralph Walton,
Regional Clerk/Director of Legislative Services

RW/np

c: Rod Phillips, MPP (Ajax)
Lorne Coe, MPP (Whitby)
Lindsay Park, MPP (Durham)
Jennifer French, MPP (Oshawa)
Laurie Scott, MPP (Haliburton/Kawartha Lakes/Brock)
Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP (Pickering-Uxbridge)
David Piccini, MPP (Northumberland-Peterborough South)
Mark Holland, MP (Ajax)
Erin O’Toole, MP (Durham)
Jamie Schmale MP (Haliburton/Kawartha Lakes/Brock)
Philip Lawrence, MP (Northumberland/Peterborough South)
Colin Carrie MP(Oshawa)
Jennifer O’Connell, MP (Pickering/Uxbridge)
Ryan Turnbull, MP (Whitby)