



May 28, 2019

The Honourable François Legault, M.N.A.  
Premier of Quebec

The Honourable Simon Jolin-Barrette, M.N.A.  
Minister of Immigration, Diversity and  
Inclusiveness

Conseil exécutif  
Édifice Honoré-Mercier  
835, boulevard René-Lévesque Est  
3e étage  
Québec, Quebec G1A 1B4

Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and  
Inclusion  
Marie-Guyart Building  
1050 Louis-Taschereau Street  
René-Lévesque Wing  
3rd Floor  
Québec, Quebec G1R 5E6

Dear Premier Legault and Minister Jolin-Barrette:

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship closely followed the public hearings, and as the National Assembly of Québec gets ready to vote on Bill 21, we would like to add our voice to the many who are strongly opposed to this bill. The Institute for Canadian Citizenship is a national, non-profit civil society organization working to foster inclusion and active citizenship in our workplaces and communities. We work with dozens of partners in Quebec—from art galleries and museums to universities, businesses, and other grassroots organizations—who believe in the mandate of promoting inclusion.

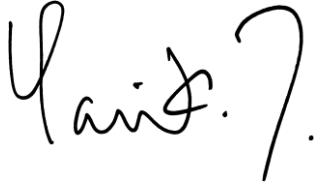
We believe that citizenship is to be protected and celebrated. All citizens are equal, regardless of their religious beliefs, how they dress, or whether they were born in Canada or are citizens by choice.

Bill 21 creates two tiers of citizenship. If it becomes law, there will be two classes of citizens in Quebec: those that enjoy full rights and those that do not. As it has been said by others, this is “legislated discrimination.” Freedom of expression, including the right to choose how one dresses, is a right that is protected in Canada’s constitution and in federal and provincial human rights laws, including the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Bill 21 denies this right to a segment of the population and prevents them from fully participating in Quebec’s society and economy. With this bill, some people will be unable to hold the same jobs as others, not because they are not qualified, but simply because of their appearance.

The world is becoming increasingly polarized. Every day, we hear stories meant to divide — between us versus them. Governments should be fighting back against this threat, not playing into it. Quebec is home to a diverse population, but diversity is not synonymous with inclusion. Instead of celebrating differences, Bill 21 penalizes them. Instead of bringing citizens together, Bill 21 splits them into two classes. The result: a weaker, more fractured society that hurts all Quebecers.

We respectfully urge you to reconsider a bill that legitimizes discrimination and creates two tiers of citizenship. It sets an unforgettable precedent. Please choose to make Quebec a place where differences are celebrated, and where citizenship means belonging.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yasir Naqvi'.

Yasir Naqvi  
Chief Executive Officer

Cc:

Mr. François Paradis, President of the National Assembly of Québec

Mr. Pierre Arcand, Leader, Quebec Liberal Party

Ms. Manon Massé, Spokesperson, Québec solidaire

Mr. Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, Spokesperson, Québec solidaire

Mr. Pascal Bérubé, Leader, Parti québécois

Mr. André Bachand, Chair, Committee on Institutions

Mrs. Carolyne Paquette, Clerk, Committee on Institutions

