



*Atheist Freethinkers*

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For immediate release*

**AFT supports the petition against religious symbols worn by Canadian cabinet ministers**

Montreal, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016 – *Atheist Freethinkers* (LPA-AFT), an association which promotes secularism and supports the rights of atheists, is proud to announce its support for the [petition against religious symbols worn by Canadian cabinet ministers](http://www.petitions24.com/petition_against_religious_symbols_canadian_cabinet) ([http://www.petitions24.com/petition\\_against\\_religious\\_symbols\\_canadian\\_cabinet](http://www.petitions24.com/petition_against_religious_symbols_canadian_cabinet)).

This petition is sponsored by the *Rassemblement pour la laïcité* (Alliance for Secularism) in collaboration with AFT and several other associations promoting secularism.

The petition is based on the 2015 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada which forbids the reciting of prayers during municipal council meetings. That decision stipulates that, “Where state officials, in the performance of their functions, profess, adopt or favour one belief to the exclusion of all others, the first two criteria for discrimination mentioned above, namely that there be an exclusion, distinction or preference and that it be based on religion, are met.”

In particular, the petition calls on ministers Harjit Singh Sajjan and Navdeep Bainsen to abstain from wearing the Sikh turban while they are on duty as Minister of National Defence and Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development respectively. Indeed, the wearing of such a partisan symbol favours one religion in particular and thus constitutes a violation of the religious neutrality of the Canadian state as defined by the Supreme Court.

– 30 –

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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**RPL petition against religious symbols worn by Canadian cabinet ministers:**

[www.petitions24.com/petition\\_against\\_religious\\_symbols\\_canadian\\_cabinet](http://www.petitions24.com/petition_against_religious_symbols_canadian_cabinet)

**Web site of *Atheist Freethinkers*:**

[www.atheology.ca](http://www.atheology.ca)